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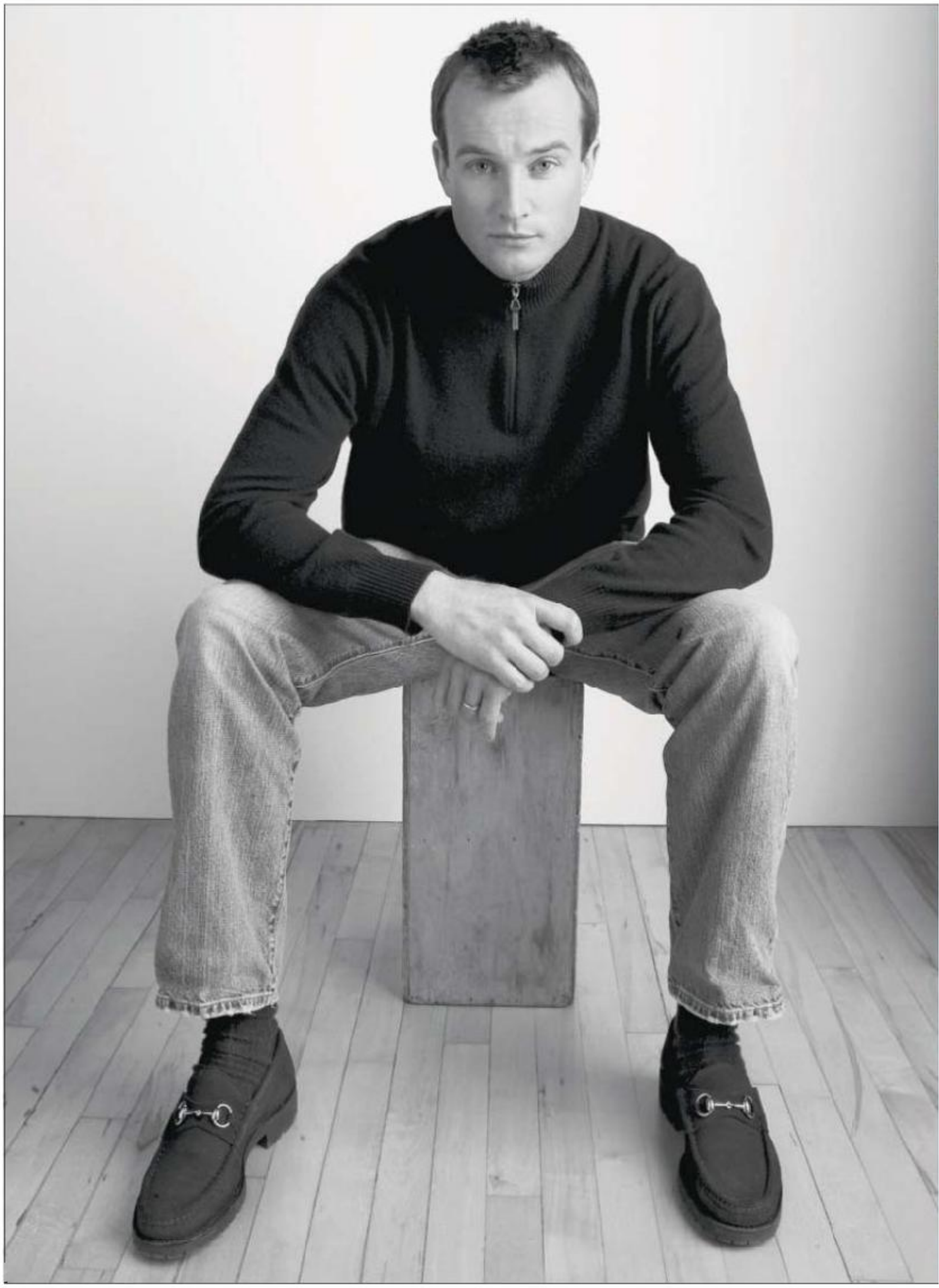
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Paul Robbins, garden designer.
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"A good designer should be able to adapt to a variety of conditions. With Monrovia's quality plants and unparalleled selection, I can work in any garden."

–Paul Robbins



Juniperus Scopulorum
'Wichita Blue'



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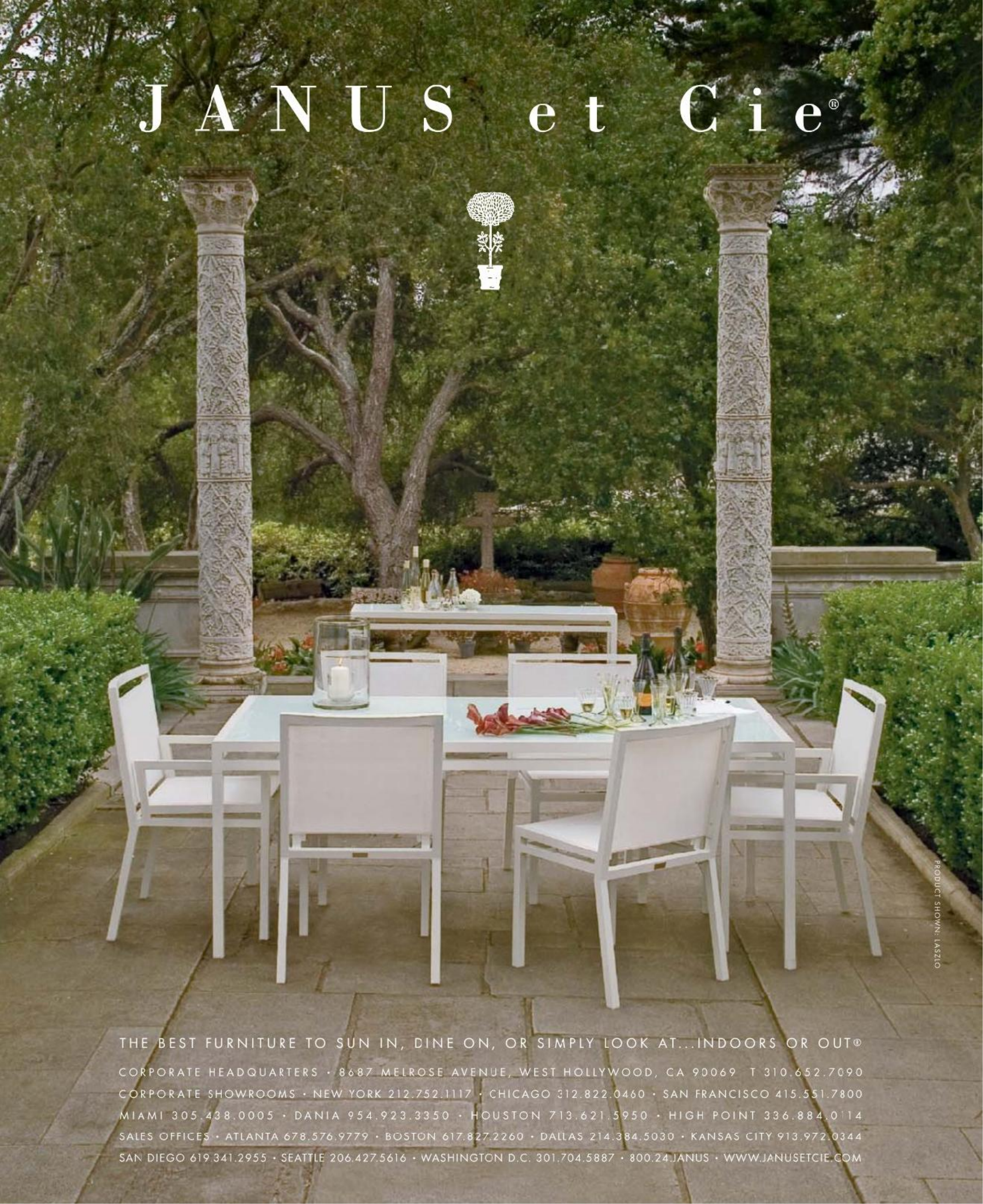
Two inviting teak chaises with an elephant chair set between them as a table are just one of many inviting settings on Julie Milligan's roof terrace in Santa Monica. See page 64. Photo by Steve Gunther.

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Features

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARION BRENNER; STEVE GUNTHER; ANDREA JONES; JON WHITTLE


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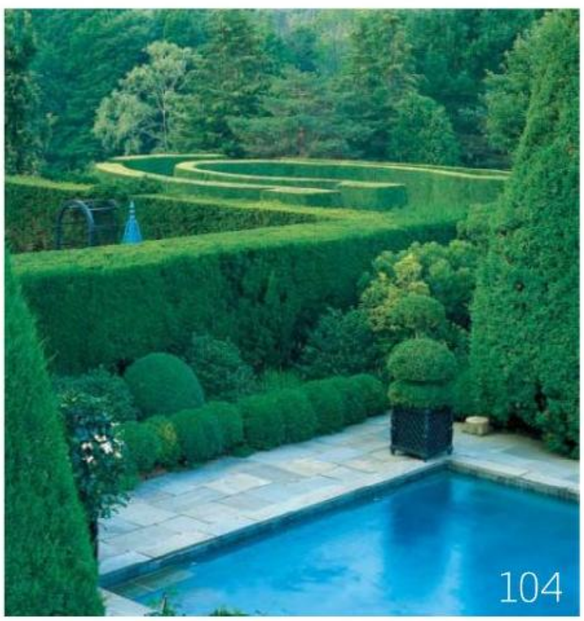
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LAURA SPECTOR RUSTIC DESIGN, MARION BRENNER, MARION BRENNER, RICHARD FELBER, MARIANNE MAJERUS, ROB CARDILLO, MARION BRENNER

POSTAL INFORMATION *Garden Design*, Number 147 (ISSN 0733-4923). Published 7 times per year (January/February, March, April, May, June/July, August/September, October/November) by Bonnier Corporation, P.O. Box 8500, Winter Park, FL 32790.

Periodicals postage paid at Winter Park, FL, and additional mailing offices. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** U.S.: $23.95 for one year, $39.95 for two years. Canadian subscribers add $8.00 per year, foreign subscribers add $21.00 per year. For subscription information, please call 800/513-0848. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Garden Design*, P.O. Box 421145, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1145. For faster service, please enclose your current subscription label. Occasionally, we make portions of our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive these offers, please advise us at 1-800-513-0848. **EDITORIAL:** Send correspondence to Editorial Department, *Garden Design*, P.O. Box 8500, Winter Park, FL 32790; E-mail: gardendesign@bonniercorp.com. We welcome all editorial submissions, but assume no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. **ADVERTISING:** Send advertising materials to RR Donnelley & Sons Company, Lancaster Premedia Center, Attn: *Garden Design* Ad Management Module, 216 Greenfield Road, Lancaster, PA 17601. Phone: 717-481-2851. Retail sales discounts available; contact Circulation Department. Following are trademarks of *Garden Design* and Bonnier Corporation, and their use by others is strictly prohibited: Fresh; Growing; Style; Sage Advice; On Design.


Natural. Creative. Inspired.

Stretching the Season

WHAT DOES A SKI MAGAZINE TALK ABOUT IN MAY? THAT SORT OF OFF-SEASON magazine dilemma, I'm happy to say, is not something we have to deal with — thanks to readers passionately dialed into *Garden Design*'s subject matter 24/7 and also to changes in the way people use their outdoor spaces. A garden is no longer viewed as something that you plant in spring, defend against bugs in midsummer and start ignoring in late summer. You may remember the classic old-style garden owner, Dagwood Bumstead: Spent his life getting yelled at by his boss and nagged by his wife Blondie, sleeping on the couch, mowing the lawn when weeds reached eye level.



SAM BROWN

Today most of us view the garden as a place to enjoy, relax in and entertain in for most if not all of the year. If your climate keeps you indoors during the cold months, you probably spend that time planning how you're going to plant, furnish, redesign and otherwise improve your outdoor space.

In this issue you'll see what we mean about stretching the pleasures of outdoor living to the max. Just a few examples:

- Julie Milligan uses her terrace (page 64) just like rooms in her house. The mild Santa Monica climate helps, but so does the sheltering overhead, the container-grown hedge that screens off the ocean wind, daybeds for napping draped in netting and a chimenea for chilly nights.
- Salvia guru Betsy Clebsch, who has written the book on salvias, speaks out for her favorite plants in Growing (page 24). Undemanding salvias are the perfect season-stretchers, many of them reaching their peak in midsummer and blooming through fall. Even around Thanksgiving, look around neglected California gardens — really old gardens like those at the missions — and chances are you'll see good old *Salvia leucantha* with its brilliant purple blooms.
- As usual, plant hunter Dan Hinkley (page 42) surprises and delights us with plants we want to know better, endorsing late-blooming hydrangeas, colchicums, asters and cyclamens to extend the season of garden enjoyment. As we go to press, Dan is receiving an endorsement of his own — the Veitch Memorial Medal, one of the Royal Horticultural Society's highest honors, has just been awarded to him. Congratulations to a great gardener.
- Of course, as in other walks of life, we owe a lot of our gardening pleasure to modern technology, like waterproof speakers and patio heaters. New weatherproof fabrics allow us to keep our furniture in the garden much longer — even fabric as genteel as good old chenille (page 22).

I'm not sure if Dagwood still appears in the comic pages. If he does, I'll bet he's napping outdoors on a red couch like the one shown on our cover.

—**BILL MARKEN,** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF


design from the ground up.
FABRIC: PERENNIALS HOLY MACKEREL IN GROTTO, BIGGER STRIPE
IN SUNNY AND SHORELINE STRIPE IN ANEMONE.

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GARDEN DESIGN MAGAZINE

BUSINESS AND EDITORIAL OFFICES	460 N. Orlando Ave., Suite 200, Winter Park, FL 32789
SUBSCRIPTIONS	800-250-1523
PUBLICATION AGREEMENT NUMBER	40018707
CANADA RETURN MAIL	P.O. Box 25542, London, Ontario N6C 6B2
CUSTOMER SERVICE	For subscription-related queries, call: 800-513-0848; write: P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1145. For editorial or advertising correspondence, write: P.O. Box 8500, Winter Park, FL 32790; e-mail: gardendesign@bonniercorp.com; or fax: 407-628-7061.

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Bonsai Bounty

In response to our story in the May 2007 issue (page 24) on the new bonsai display courtyards at Chicago Botanic Garden, a reader in North Carolina has alerted us to another noteworthy collection. —**Ed.**

There's a very interesting bonsai display just outside Asheville at the North Carolina Arboretum (see ncarboretum.org). There are traditional bonsai with plant material from Asia, but the most compelling examples are the beautiful specimens created from plants native to the Appalachian Mountains. There is much more to see at the arboretum, so visitors should allow at least half a day. —**Robert Earnest, Lumberton, North Carolina**

West Hollywood Update

The citrus tree in the West Hollywood back garden of John Chase intrigued several readers (May 2007, page 80). Some guessed Bearss lime, but for the record, it was a Meyer lemon original to the property. Apologies to owner John Chase and his domestic partner, John Cowan, who was incorrectly described as a guest. —**Ed.**

Outdoor Mats

Readers inquiring about funky outdoor mats of recycled plastic (May 2007, page 42) should know that similar Turkish-style rugs are available from 3rliving.com, or for bright contemporary looks try homeinfatuation.com. We should have credited Emily Young, our consulting editor in Los Angeles, for this article. —**Ed.**

Edible Source

The June/July 2007 issue, page 79, refers to "rainbirdnursery.com." I found no such address when I tried to visit the website. —**Jim Gordon**

Our mistake. We meant to say Raintree Nursery, raintreenursery.com, as a good source for edible plants. —**Ed.**

Hunting for a Plant

Where can I buy the *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'County Park Dwarf' mentioned in Plant Hunter, May 2007, page 86? —**Barbara, by e-mail**

This plant is hard to find, but Cistus Nursery in Sauvie Island, Oregon, does grow it. Unfortunately they are sold out right now, but should have new stock this fall. Josh McCullough, of Cistus, recommends some alternatives: "Other options, depending on your zone, include Agonis flexuosa *'Jervis Bay After Dark',* Dodonaea viscosa *'Purpurea',* Acacia baileyana *var.* purpurea *and* Rhododendron *'P.J.M.' All these have evergreen foliage that is purple for at least a portion of the year." Call Cistus Nursery at 503-621-2233 or see cistus.com.* —**Ed.**

Sculpture Garden Quibbles

I was thrilled to learn from your article (April 2007, page 44) that the new Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle had incorporated Northwest native flora, but having viewed the garden last week I'm not sure I share your enthusiasm. Granted, it's a highly stylized design and is not meant to imitate an actual forest, and obviously it's a young planting, but after a few months in the ground, many of the plants seem to be struggling, and I'm not sure the rigidly formal layout can ever come close to evoking the feeling of a woodland. Certainly, the sculptures at the park are dramatic, and the views are sublime. So I'll withhold judgment on the planting for a while.

I do have a couple of small quibbles, though. First, I very much wanted identification of the grasses and flowers in the meadows and could not find any information. At the planting of native roses I found one label that said *Rosa nutkana*. However, I only saw one in the entire planting, the rest of which I am certain was bald hip rose, *Rosa gymnocarpa*. —**Edna Dam, Vashon Island, Washington**

We've since learned that the rose planting was a mistake, and that they will be replaced with nutkana. Writer Valerie Easton replies: "I think we need to wait and see how the plantings develop. Many have only been in the ground eight months, and trees were transplanted at a fairly mature size to give some scale to the site — which means they will struggle. Your point about plant identification is a good one. I suggest you contact the Seattle Art Museum and ask for more/better labels."







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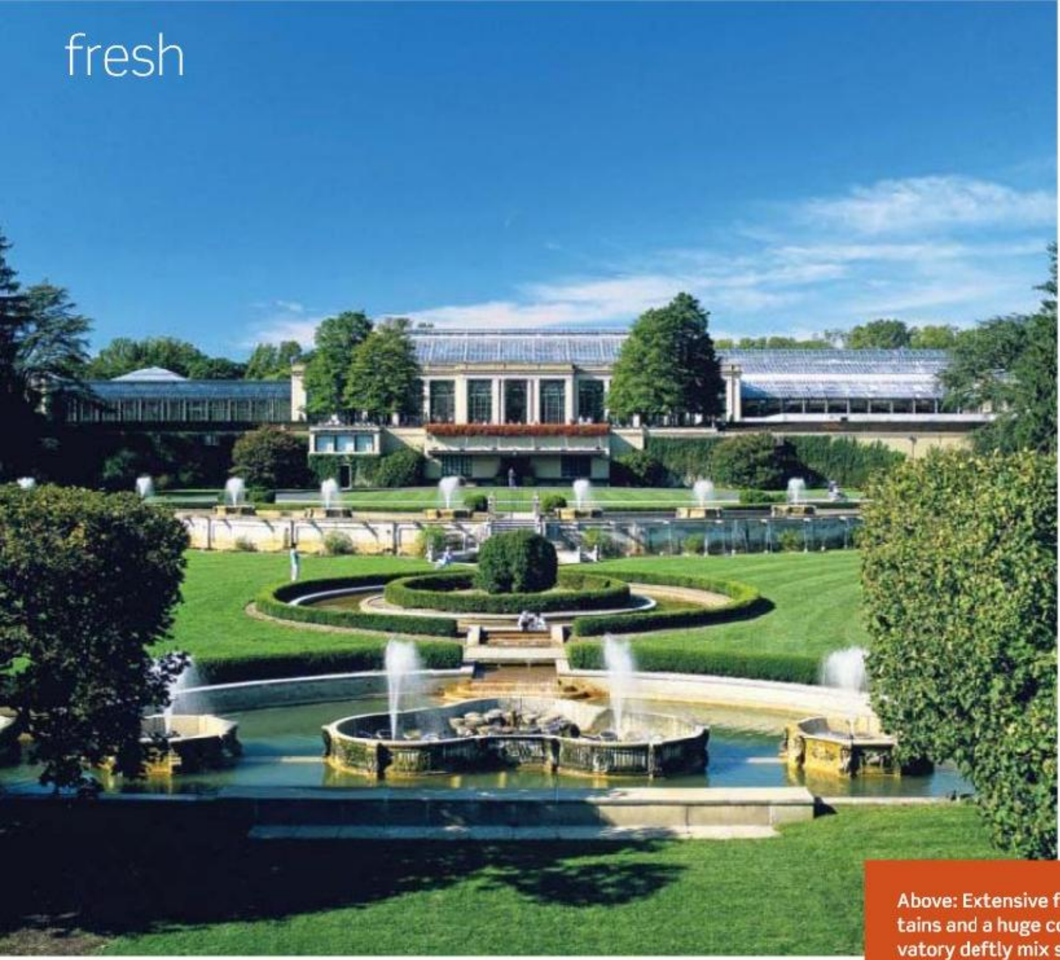
Making Magic

In a renaissance moving through the world's roughly 2,500 botanic gardens, a spirit of innovation and creativity is blowing the dust from hundreds of »



Modern botanical gardens are adding "wow" elements to enhance the public experience. Here Dale Chihuly's *Red and Amber Reeds* among Madagascar plants at Fairchild.

CHELSEA STICKEL



special places. The modern botanic garden is becoming a crucible where specimens, collections, education and design work their alchemy together, with a mission to grow both plants and people.

As a student studying practical horticulture in a botanic garden, I noticed that the public was often regarded as a nuisance akin to rabbits, "interfering" with attaining horticultural perfection. And I was frequently told by colleagues that the most dangerous animal that could be released in a botanic garden was a landscape architect — after all, they know nothing about plants, right? How wrong we were. A botanic garden should be about theater and creating places, both sophisticated and startling, where the exuberance and splendor of plants can work their magic on a visiting public. Once the magic has worked (never underestimate the power of the wow factor), then we can start discussing the realities of the world and the need to work for a sustainable future. At Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables, Florida, we use orchids, mango and chocolate to tell stories about the history and current state of the planet.

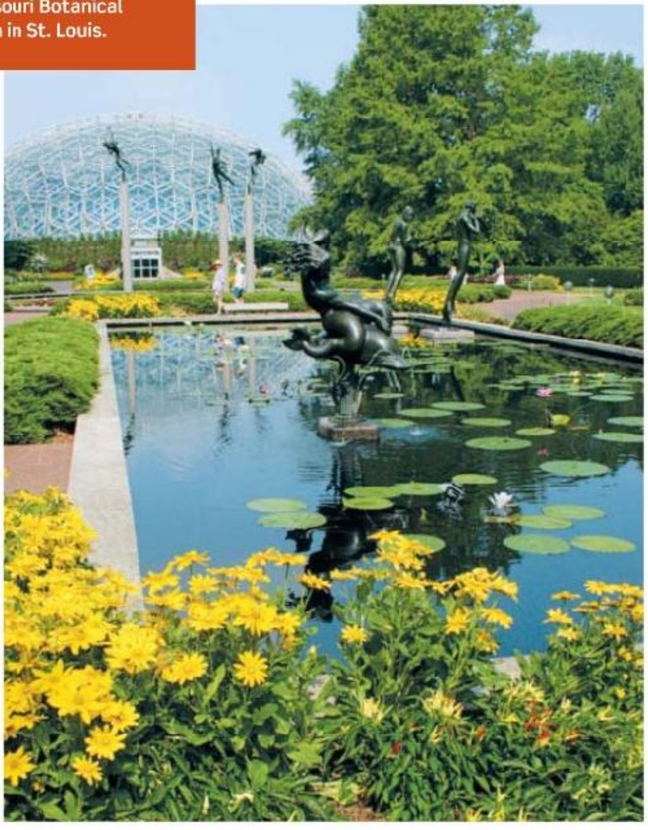
Botanic gardens need to present plants in a way that is beautiful, exciting and even provocative. And gardens from Miami to Oman are turning to landscape architects and designers to create exciting outdoor spaces. These potent venues can even provide recognized icons — like the biomes at the Eden Project near St. Austell in the United Kingdom or the Climatron at Missouri Botanical Garden.

To meet the challenge, gardens across the United States and Canada are developing spaces that are much more than traditional plant collections:

- The Montreal Botanic Garden opened the First Nations Garden in 2001 to celebrate Native American and Inuit cultures and showcase contemporary art.
- At Chicago Botanic Garden, Wolfgang Oehme and James van Sweden created the Gardens of the Great Basin, a series of prairie-inspired gardens.
- The Atlanta Botanical Garden has adopted dramatic sculpture exhibits as a defining motif, with Niki de Saint Phalle following after Dale Chihuly.
- The recently renovated East Conservatory Complex at Longwood Gardens shows a keen and creative eye for landscape detailing and planting.
- Noted landscape architect Raymond Jungles is currently designing dramatic tropical spaces for gardens in Naples and Key West, Florida.

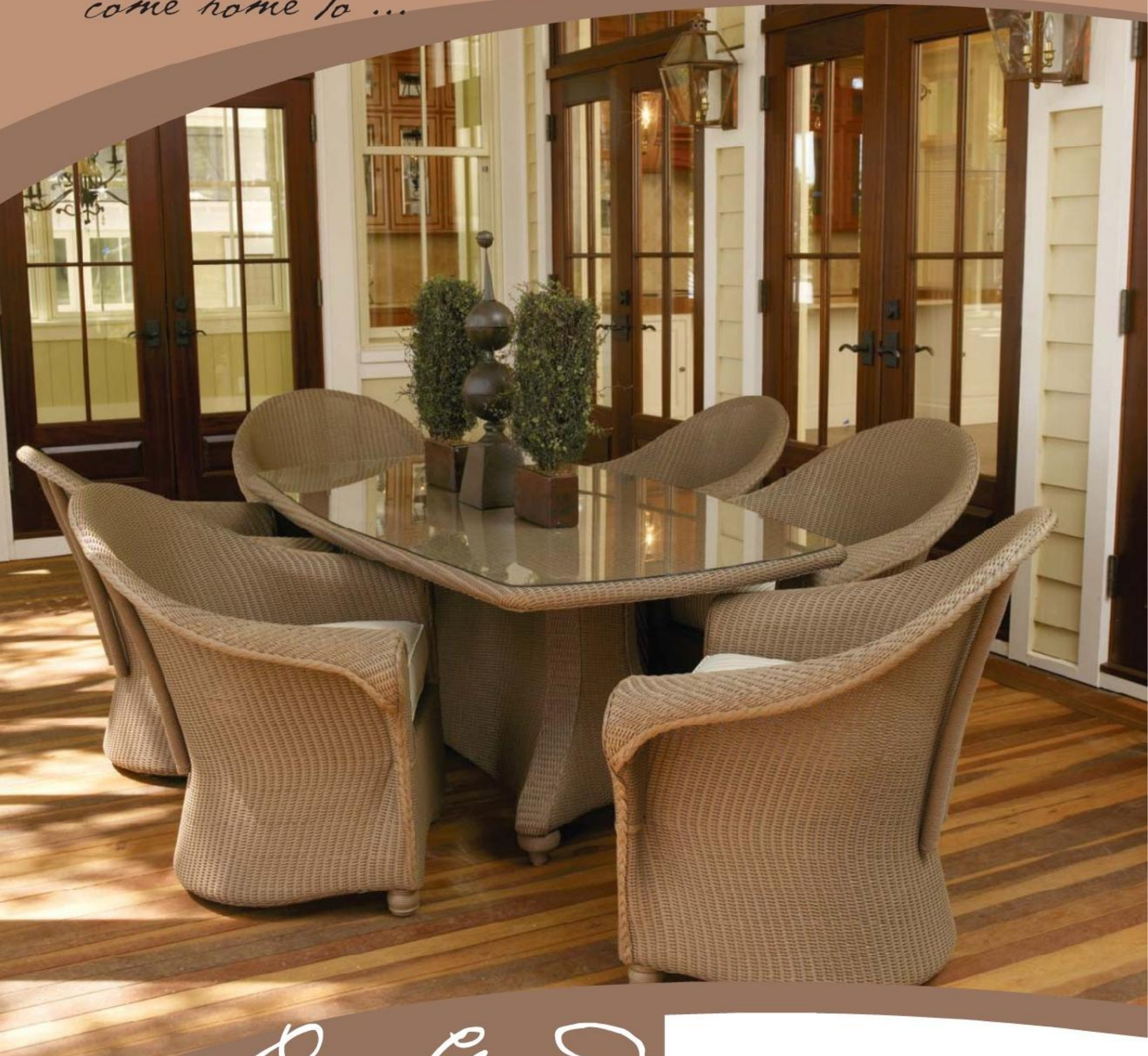
As a horticulturist and conservation biologist, I recognize the obstacles we face in changing public attitudes about plants. Exciting and sophisticated botanic garden design will play an increasing role in promoting an emotional response to sustainability and plant diversity. — **MIKE MAUNDER,** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Above: Extensive fountains and a huge conservatory deftly mix showmanship and horticulture at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvia. Below: The geodesic dome of the Climatron® has become the signature image of Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis.



LEFT: LONGWOOD GARDENS/L. ALBEE; RIGHT: KEVIN WOLF

fyi: For more information, check out these recent books on botanical gardens: *The New York Botanical Garden* (Harry N. Abrams Inc., 2006); *Longwood Gardens: 100 Years of Garden Splendor* (Longwood Gardens, 2005); *Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park* by Carol Grove (University of Massachusetts Press, 2005).





collectables

White Magic

Absence of color emphasizes forms — and whether you are drawn to botanical naturalism or the geometry of crystals and bark, white porcelain suits any style of interior. From back, clockwise: Plate by Christina Bryer: $1,200; from Amaridian gallery; call 917-463-3719 or see amaridianusa.com. ■ Vessel in unglazed porcelain by Mary Chatham: about $2,800; from Gerald Bland; call 212-987-8505 or see maryadamschatham.com. ■ Vase with handmade floral appliqué by Bodo Sperlein for Lladró: $1,800; see lladro.com. ■ Pomegranate branch, in porcelain and bronze, by David Wiseman: $920; see dwiseman.com or call the Shop at Cooper Hewitt, 212 849 8355. ■ "Rococo" candlestick by Ted Muehling: $1,200; call 212 431 3825 or see tedmuehling.com. ■ Leaf box by Betsy Nield: $125; from Amaridian gallery; as above. ■ "Organica" candle holder: $175; from Lladró; as above. —JF

MICHAEL KRAUS





Flora Grubb (above) offers a choice selection of plants, like the succulent arrangement at right, in her new San Francisco shop.

shopping

Urban Outfitter

In San Francisco, Flora Grubb opens a design-savvy nursery for the public

FLORA GRUBB HAS DONE IT AGAIN. IF HER GUERRERO Street Gardens in San Francisco put her on the map as California's horticultural fashionista, drawing the city's best landscape designers to her door, her newest venture, Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco's up-and-coming Bayview, just east of downtown, announces the new age of the urban nursery — and raises the bar for garden centers everywhere.

Flora's secret: She offers hard-to-find designer favorites to the public. To that end, she scours the countryside for small growers specializing in the rare and unusual, and offers Bay Area residents plants of all varieties, from palms to members of the Proteaceae, to as many acacias and agaves as you can name. No rows of six packs here — the grounds are laid out like a garden with rambling paths and displays of ever-changing combinations.



Set into an edgy, contemporary 8,000-square-foot warehouse made from prefabricated metal and recycled barn wood, the wide open, solar-powered space gets high marks for sustainability, while offering everything from the hottest outdoor furniture to fire pits, outdoor bathtubs (Flora's answer to the hot tub), books, containers, sculpture, the latest in unusual houseplants and even drinks at a state-of-the-art coffee bar. With display carts set on wheels, it will be easy to move them aside for the speaker series Flora plans for the fall. I only wish I could have been there for the May 12 opening party. For more information call 415-648-2670 or see floragrubb.com. —**DONNA DORIAN**

MARION BRENNER (4)



Chic ideas from Flora Grubb Gardens: *Cussonia paniculata* in a Chinese jar, ceramic cloud-motif Chinese garden stool and a vine-wood sphere.

outdoor fabric

Blue Sky

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MICHAEL KRAUS

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: "Lugano Aqua" from Giati: Call 805-965-6535 or see giati.com. ■ "Outdoor San Marco" in Adriatica, designed by Old World Weavers, available from Stark Fabric: Call 212-355-7186 or see starkfabric.com. ■ "Lola" in Aruba from Aláxi: Call 800-453-5777 or see www.alaxifabrics.com. ■ "Nubby" in Sand from Perennials Outdoor Fabrics: Call 888-322-4773 or see perennialsfabrics.com. ■ "Beachy Keen" in Blue whale from Donghia: Call 800-DONGHIA or see donghia.com. All fabrics listed are sold through architects and designers. — DD


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Salvia Savvy

Sparkling in summer sunshine, these easy-to-care-for garden favorites are noted for their wildly fragrant leaves and brilliant flowers

COLORFUL FLOWERS SURROUNDED BY HUMMINGBIRDS AND INSECTS SIGNIFY THE FRAgrance and beauty of salvias. In classical Greece and medieval times, salvias, or sages, both fascinated and served mankind. Grown to promote health and happiness, their virtues were extolled in ancient herbals where medicinal and culinary recipes were set alongside charms and spells. With more than 900 species worldwide, salvias are one of the largest genera of the mint family, which also includes rosemary, thyme, lavender and basil. When hybrids and selections are added, the numbers become staggering. The salvias in this article highlight a few gems of the genus. —**BETSY CLEBSCH,** AUTHOR OF *THE NEW BOOK OF SALVIAS* (TIMBER PRESS, 2003)



SALVIA LEUCANTHA
Easy to establish, Mexican bush sage is popular in the United States and in Europe. Typically with white flowers held in purple calyces, 'Midnight' is entirely purple. Flowers prodigiously in full sun from summer until frost. Hardy to about 10 degrees F.

Appeal: Brilliant spikes of flowers and lush foliage win approval in containers and drifts in the garden. Deep purples, true blues, pinks, shades of peach and yellows as rich as butter are just a few of their many colors. The handsome, aromatic foliage highlights the vibrant blooms, sweeping salvias into all parts of the garden.

Zones: Most available salvia species come from the Mediterranean region or Mexico and seldom survive temperatures below 20 degrees. In some areas (Zone 6 and warmer), many salvias are hardy; in colder zones they can still be used as annuals since most salvias grow and flower rapidly. A well-rooted plant in a four-inch pot when planted in the garden might be in full bloom in less than four weeks. Individual hardiness is given with each description.

LEFT: JERRY PAVIA; RIGHT: BARB RIES



SALVIA SPATHACEAE 'KAWATRE' Sprawling California native for light shade. Arrow-shaped basal leaves are covered with glands that release a fruity fragrance. Called hummingbird sage, it has an extraordinarily long bloom season. Hardy to about 20 degrees.



1



2



3

[1] SALVIA MEXICANA A shrubby perennial that reaches four to five feet in height and three to four feet in width, this elegant and upright salvia requires temperatures above 20 degrees. It's a highly variable plant in the wild, and nurseries propagate many different clones. In a mild climate, the leaves tend to be evergreen. It needs almost full sun and protection from wind to flower well.

[2] SALVIA PUBERULA This shrublike perennial from Mexico usually reaches three to five feet in height, coming into glorious bloom in autumn. It needs at least a half day of sun and well-drained soil enriched with humus. An occasional deep watering is desirable. The inflated flowers are a rich magenta and held in a calyx of the same color. Hardy to about 20 degrees. To grow replacement plants to use in next year's garden, take cuttings in early autumn.

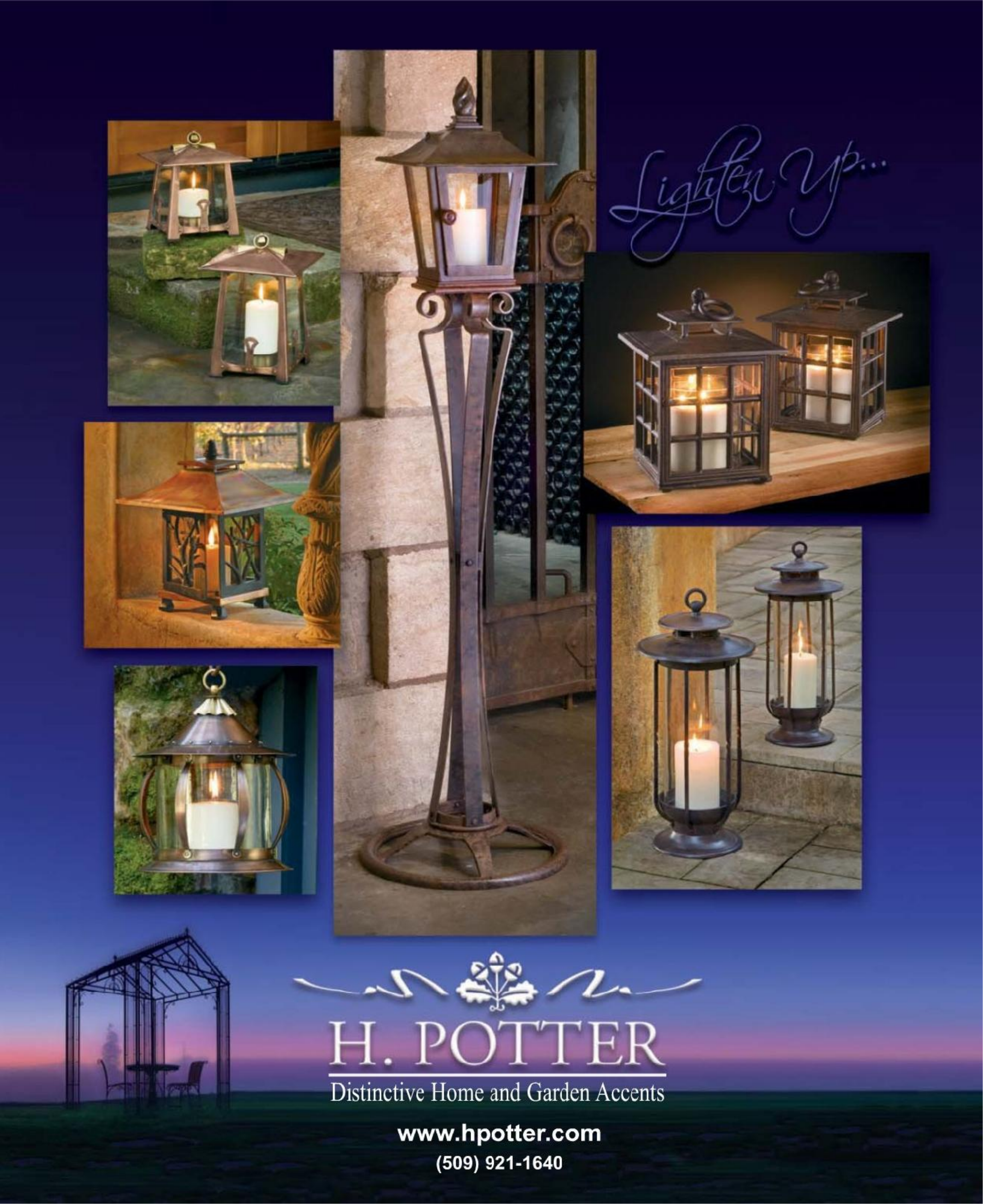
[3] SALVIA REPTANS This perennial is lax in habit and sprawls to three feet or more in width. It prefers sun or partial shade and ordinary garden soil. Lovely azure-blue flowers, barely a half inch long, are held in a tiny dark calyx that enhances the flowers' beauty. It is an ideal plant for a container. A delightful "filler" when combined with fancy-leaved lettuces, parsley and basil. The plant is deciduous and becomes dormant at 30 degrees, and it probably cannot survive if temperatures fall below 20 degrees.

Exposure: Full sun to over half-day sunlight is needed to promote bloom, though some salvias require high shade. Though known for drought tolerance, plants need more irrigation if the garden is in a hot or windy area.

Soil: Both in the garden and in containers, a mulch of wood chips or small, rough-edged rock is highly recommended. This not only protects roots but helps keep soil temperature and moisture content consistent.

Care: Good drainage is primary in the cultivation of salvias. Plants do not need rich soil, but they must have friable soil that can drain quickly. This is particularly important during the wet and sunless days of winter. In pots ordinary garden soil mixed with perlite allows water to drain rapidly from the roots. Most salvias are light feeders, and only occasionally need fertilizers. Pruning spent inflorescences (deadheading) is important to encourage repeat blooming; but as a result, seed production is often sacrificed.

BARB RIES (3)


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1



2



3

[1] SALVIA MADRENSIS Blooming in late summer and autumn, this is indeed a salvia to watch as it develops throughout the growing period. Its square stems with heart-shaped leaves reach five to six feet and are beautifully indented from corner to corner. The climax comes when the lemon-yellow flowers bloom. Full sun and a yearly mulch are needed. Temperatures below 20 degrees will cause survival problems.

[2] SALVIA X JAMENSIS A hybrid swarm of colorful salvias from Mexico was introduced to horticulture in the early 1990s. Many have unusual flower colors, and numerous selections are bicolored. Plants are usually rounded, about two feet tall and wide with small evergreen leaves. Blooming is prolific in late spring and early autumn, reflecting the plant's response to daylight. Easy to grow in full sun with excellent drainage, the plant should be deadheaded to encourage continual flowering. Hardy to about 20 degrees.

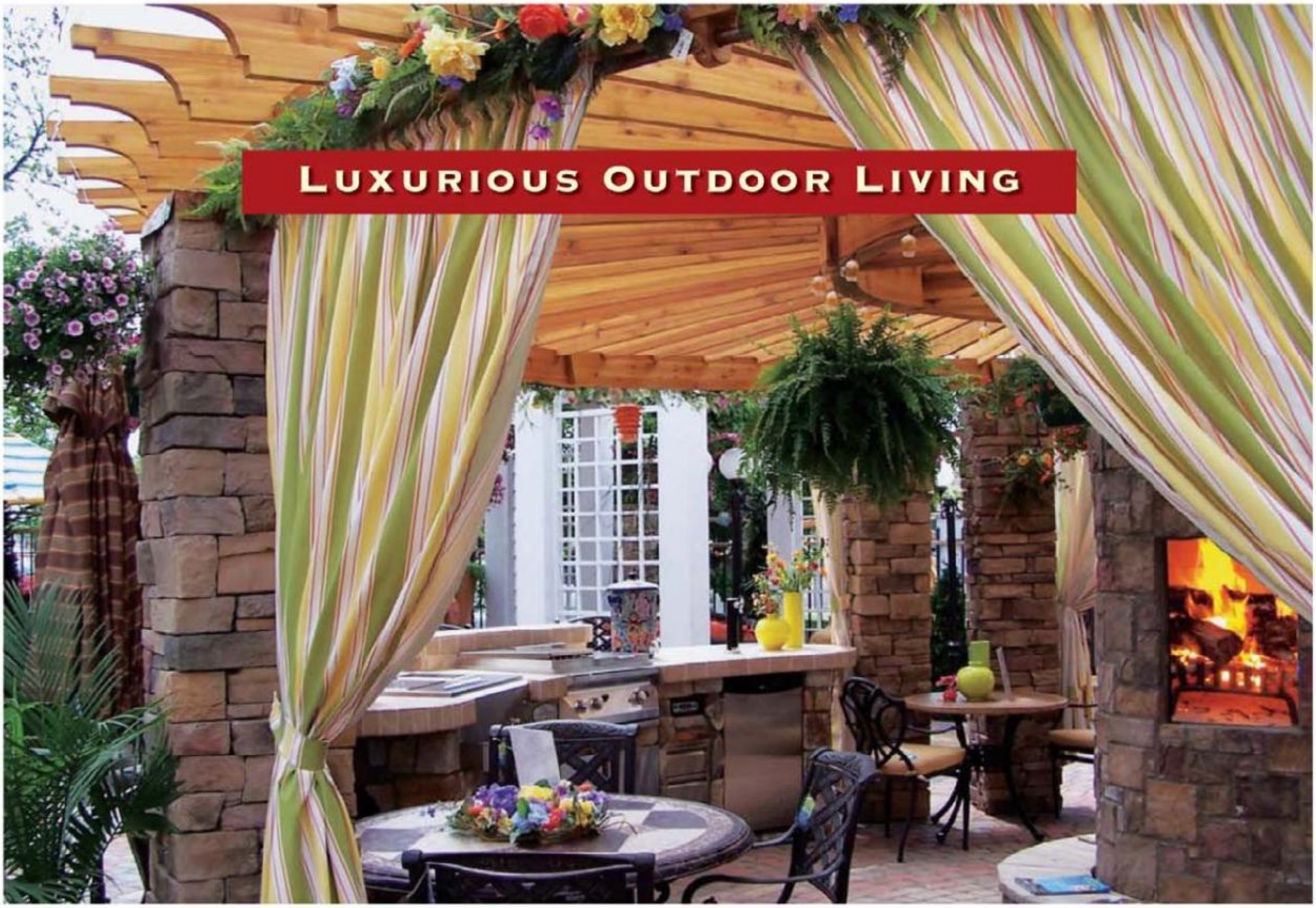
[3] SALVIA SEMIATRATA With an eye-catching dark violet-blue blotch on the lower lip of its flower, this plant tends to be three feet high and excellent in a container. Fast drainage, loamy soil, good air circulation and sun for at least half the day are required. If temperatures fall below 25 degrees, plants should be protected in a greenhouse. This salvia will repeat bloom over a long period of time.

BARB RIES (4)

designing with salvias ■ The variety of flower colors and sizes and long bloom times make salvias indispensable additions to perennial borders, even when used outside their hardiness ranges as annuals. And they play well with plants having bolder foliage and larger flowers. ■ Some salvias, such as *Salvia leucantha*, are late-blooming and make a glorious autumn display, extending the season of garden enjoyment. ■ In containers, low-growing salvias with dainty leaves and flowers serve as fillers or drape over the pot edge. Taller types can be centerpiece plants. ■ Site salvias with pleasant-scented foliage near the edge of a path to enjoy the fragrance. ■ Since salvias are magnets for butterflies and hummingbirds, they are unparalleled in wildlife gardens.



SALVIA MUELLERI
Called royal purple sage, this salvia has a very limited habitat in Mexico. Described as a perennial, it is about two feet tall, spreads by runners and by autumn's end builds up a woody base. Shiny green leaves lightly cover the plant along with myriad purple flowers held in tiny purple calyces. Royal purple sage is hardy to 10 degrees and requires little more than full sun and weekly water.


LUXURIOUS OUTDOOR LIVING





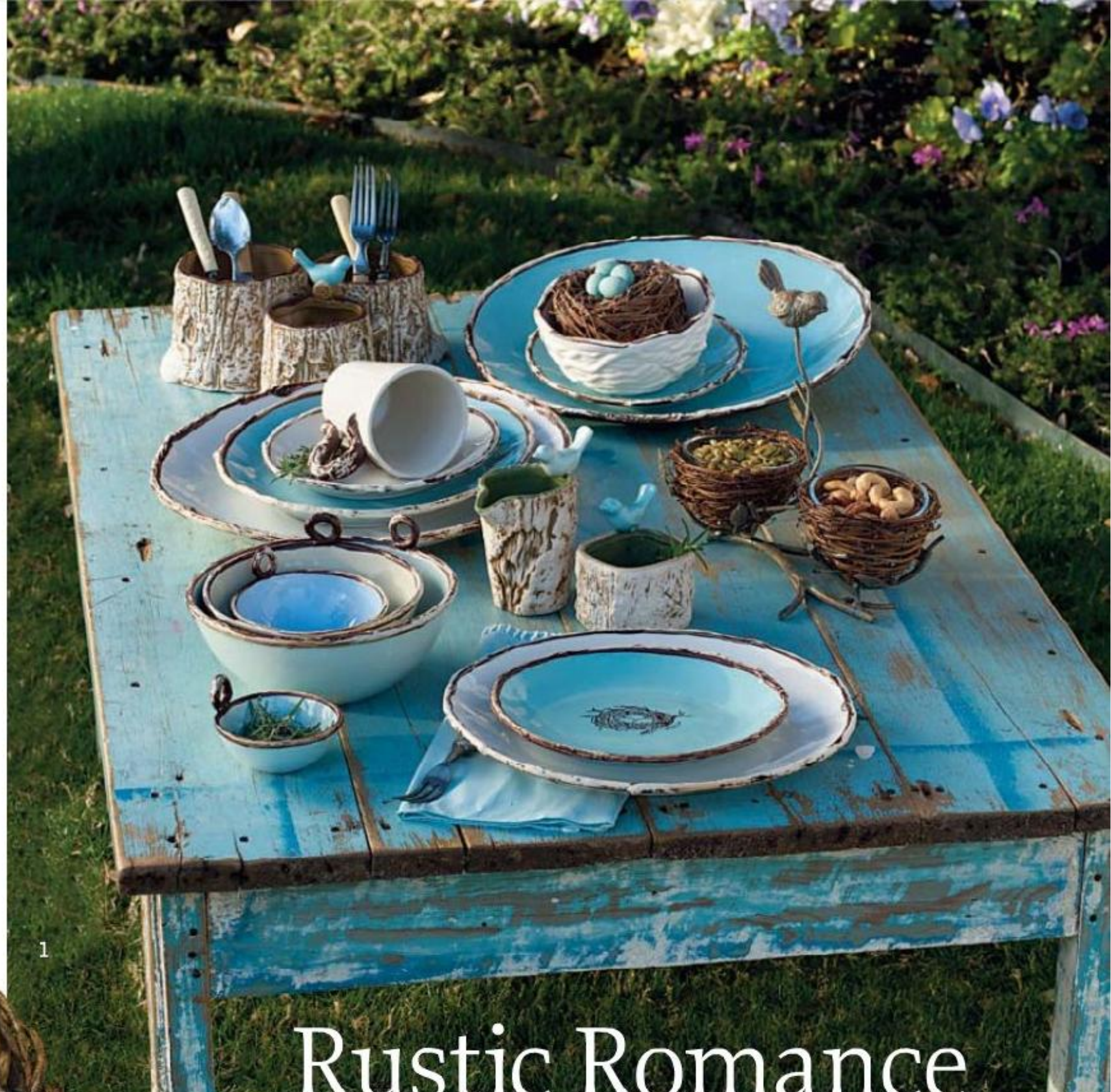


[1] CERAMIC TABLEWARE: Match Marie Antoinette's faux-bois porcelain with your own twig-inspired set of blue hand-glazed faux-bois ceramic stoneware. From Room ServiceHome.com: Pieces range from $10 to $79. Call 800-588-1170.

[2] NARCISSUS WALL MIRROR: Made from gnarled and twisted Oriental bittersweet vine, then cast in aluminum or bronze, each signed and dated mirror is re-imagined by the artist making each unique and durable for outdoor use. From Laura Spector Rustic Design: by special order. Call 203-254-3952 or see lauraspectorrusticdesign.com.

[3] CONTEMPORARY URN: Let this 16-inch-tall contemporary faux-bois cast-resin urn stand on its own indoors on a mantel or shelf, or use it with a liner to hold your own edgy bouquet. From Koo de Kir: $125. Call 800-944-2591 or see koodekir.com.

1



2



3



Rustic Romance

Stylized and simplified, a new generation of faux bois refreshes an ancient craft

FANCIFUL, UNASSUMING, EVER IMAGINATIVE, FAUX-BOIS FURNITURE IS THE STUFF OF fairy tales. Fit for a thatched cottage or lunch under a shady tree, it was just what Marie Antoinette had in mind for Le Petit Hameau, where, to escape the formalities of state, she set up house as a shepherdess and settled into a life close to nature.

Whether it is used to craft furniture, accessories or garden structures, faux bois — or false wood — imitates the gnarled beauty of rustic wood. Ever since the Romans, artisans have fashioned it from concrete and stone as a fanciful means of blending art and nature, and over the centuries, the style has been revived again and again. In the 18th century, landscape architect André Le Notre populated the estates of Europe with faux-bois grottoes, follies and bridges imagined in the grotesque manner. Later the style resurfaced again, fashioned by craftsmen, who, seeking to bring permanent delight to simple garden furniture made from rustic wood, turned to making faux-bois renditions in concrete and cast stone. For decades afterward, these pieces were coveted by collectors.

Each revival has brought its own interpretations. In the hands of the current generation, the massive, treelike forms of 19th-century faux bois have given rise to simplified, stylized and lighter forms to suit the contemporary garden — and continue the celebration. — **DONNA DORIAN**



4



5

TOP RIGHT: MANYA TAN



6

[**4**] **EMERSON BENCH:** Inspired by the grottoes and follies of yore, this streamlined rendition of traditional faux bois is hand-molded by artisans. Applying a unique stone matrix over a galvanized steel frame, they sculpt each bench to make a work of art. From JANUS et Cie: $2,208. Call 800-245-2687 or see janusetcie.com.

[**5**] **TRUNK TABLE:** Nature becomes art when this tree stump look-a-like table base made from molded resin with an applied faux-bois finish is topped with glass. From Moth Design: $7,860. Call 818-905-9992 or see mothdesign.com.

[**6**] **LEXINGTON SUITE:** This chic collection of modern faux bois was designed by the Austrian art historian Wolfgang Hofherr using concrete over stainless steel and applied in the original manner of the 19th-century masters. From Authentic Provence: $22,400. Call 561-805-9995 or see authenticprovence.com.

[**7**] **CURVED BENCH SET:** Crafted from hand-carved concrete, these meticulously detailed French faux bois-inspired benches were designed with a continuous, low profile in mind. Each includes a pull-out purse table perfect for accommodating a coffee and a newspaper. From Branch: by special order. Call 248-874-1314 or see thebranchstudio.com.

[**8**] **CHINESE PLANTERS:** The Western tradition of faux bois has been matched by a history equally long and revered in the East. These contemporary Chinese ceramic faux-bois planters are each hand-decorated and signed. From Pollen: $68 to $88. Call 404-262-2296 or see pollenatlanta.com.



7



8

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Serene Comfort

The comforts of California outdoor living, the serenity of a classic Japanese garden

THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO BACK AND WORK ON the same garden can be good news — for designer and clients alike. That's what happened with landscape architect Don Boos and this garden in Los Altos Hills, California. Boos had the chance to reflect his clients' changing needs in different phases of the garden's development. Today, all the comforts of California living go hand in hand with the serenity of a Japanese-style landscape — the best symbol of this fusion being the "Zen" bocce court behind the teahouse.

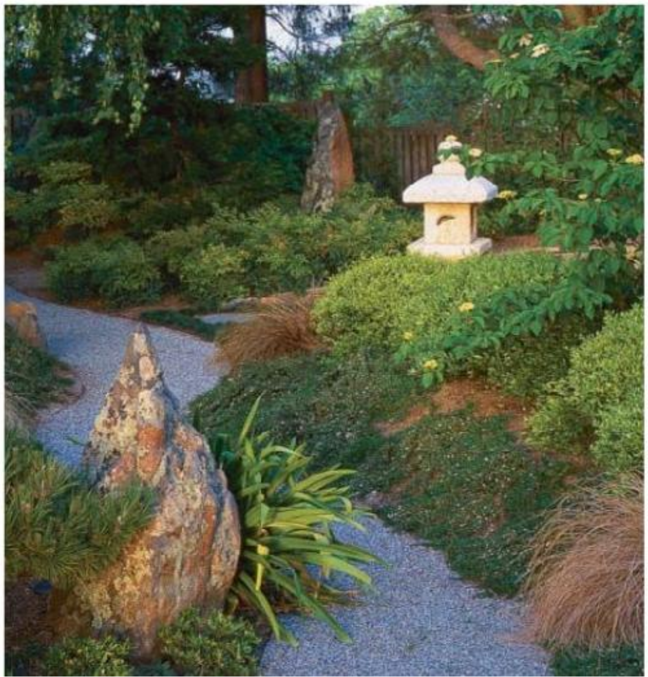
Starting in 1988, when a planting of birch added much-needed shade around the original house, through to the latest stage dating to 2000, when the owners demolished the original house and moved to a Japanese aesthetic, Boos has left his mark on the space. He says, "Being called back several times meant I was able to satisfy different goals of my clients and reconnect with craftspeople I'd known from way back."

Boos asked Makoto Imai, a Japanese master carpenter, to make the outdoor space reflect the style of the new home. For the garden entrance, Imai created a stone bridge, with teak handrails, spanning a koi pond and waterfall on the edge of the swimming pool, a key element in the garden.

To anchor the house, Boos created



Left: White flowering dogwood marries happily with Japanese-style fencing, beams and arches. Redwood fencing was treated with cement slurry for instant aging, changing the reddish tones to gray. Below: Crushed rock paths snake around the garden, linking different areas cohesively.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARION BRENNER



MIGHTY MAPLES

Japanese maples, with their naturally multi-limbed, spreading habit, make magnificent feature plants in any style of garden. Here the mature maple is especially appropriate, given the Japanese-inspired gazebo and use of rocks and gravel.

BOCCE ISLAND

Rising up from a bocce court that is both functional and ornamental, a tiny island links visually with carefully placed boulders. It hosts outcrops of heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*) and various grasses in a green-gray medley.

MELTING POT

In this garden of globally diverse design influences, Summit's Picket range of curvaceous wooden furniture looks perfectly at home under the gazebo. The four-square placement of the chairs makes both visual and practical sense.

TEA TIME

The Japanese-inspired gazebo evokes a traditional teahouse, but in a see-through version. Designing the eaves with a generous overhang beyond the edge of the deck ensures adequate shelter and shade when sitting under the roof.



A miniature landscape within the garden: A dry stream of pebbles flows through lush hills of baby's tears. Japanese painted fern, iris and wild ginger make a riverside planting. Rocks suggest mountains and a bridge.

a cohesive mass of rock, using cement casting, that looks entirely natural. An existing spa was repurposed, now forming part of the koi pond and waterfall. The recycled materials added a veneer of age.

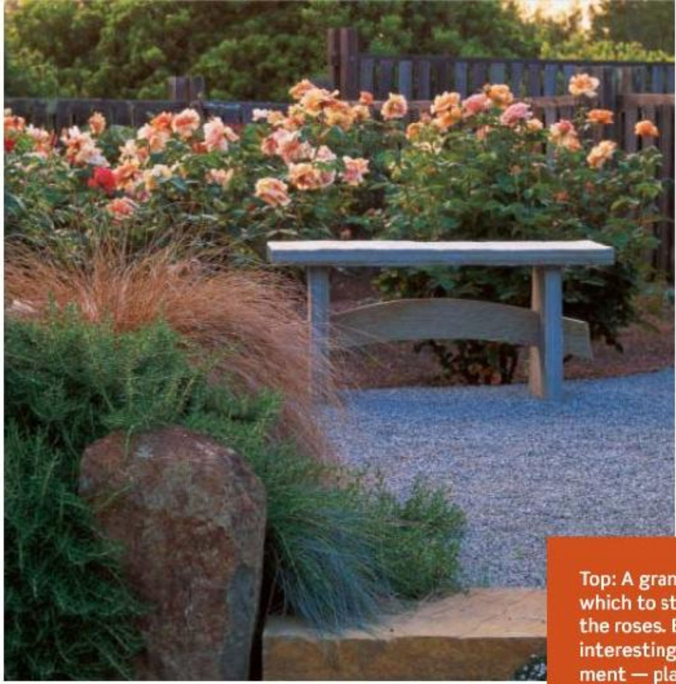
FUNCTION: The idea was to create outdoor living spaces encircling the house, with the main area for entertaining in front, alongside the complex of swimming pool, waterfall and koi pond. Elsewhere, smaller, more private spaces make relaxing places to sit.

LAYOUT: Working off the building footprint automatically creates a series of outdoor rooms. Borrowed scenery, in the form of views of the nearby hills, fits the garden into the surrounding landscape. Overall, Boos' plan is a fusion of Japanese-style elements with naturalistic ground forms and planting.

UNDERFOOT: A varied paving palette of natural materials subtly defines each space, changing with the circular flow around the garden. Dark pewter-colored crushed gravel makes an understated surface in the kitchen garden and side-entry courtyard. Outside the living room, a few steps down from a heartwood redwood deck, the concrete pool surround gives way to naturalistic paving with stone from Wyoming. The bocce court is

half size, surfaced with decomposed granite. **WALLS & ENTRIES:** Bamboo fencing makes an attractive, semi-opaque screen. Timber fencing with slats of varying widths echoes the Japanese theme. Shinto-style beams above gates and along fences underscore the mood. **OVERHEAD:** Boos designed the teahouse for a previous phase of the garden's evolution. It was moved to its present site between the bocce court and the main deck. Stacked redwood beams match the scale of the mature surrounding trees. — **RUTH CHIVERS**

E-mail donboosdesign@comcast.net. The garden's builder was Modern Landscaping Inc., of Campbell, CA; see modernlandscapinginc.com.



Top: A granite bench on which to stop and smell the roses. Below: An interesting floor treatment — planks radiate from the center of a deck grouped with low seats and tables from Summit's Classics range.

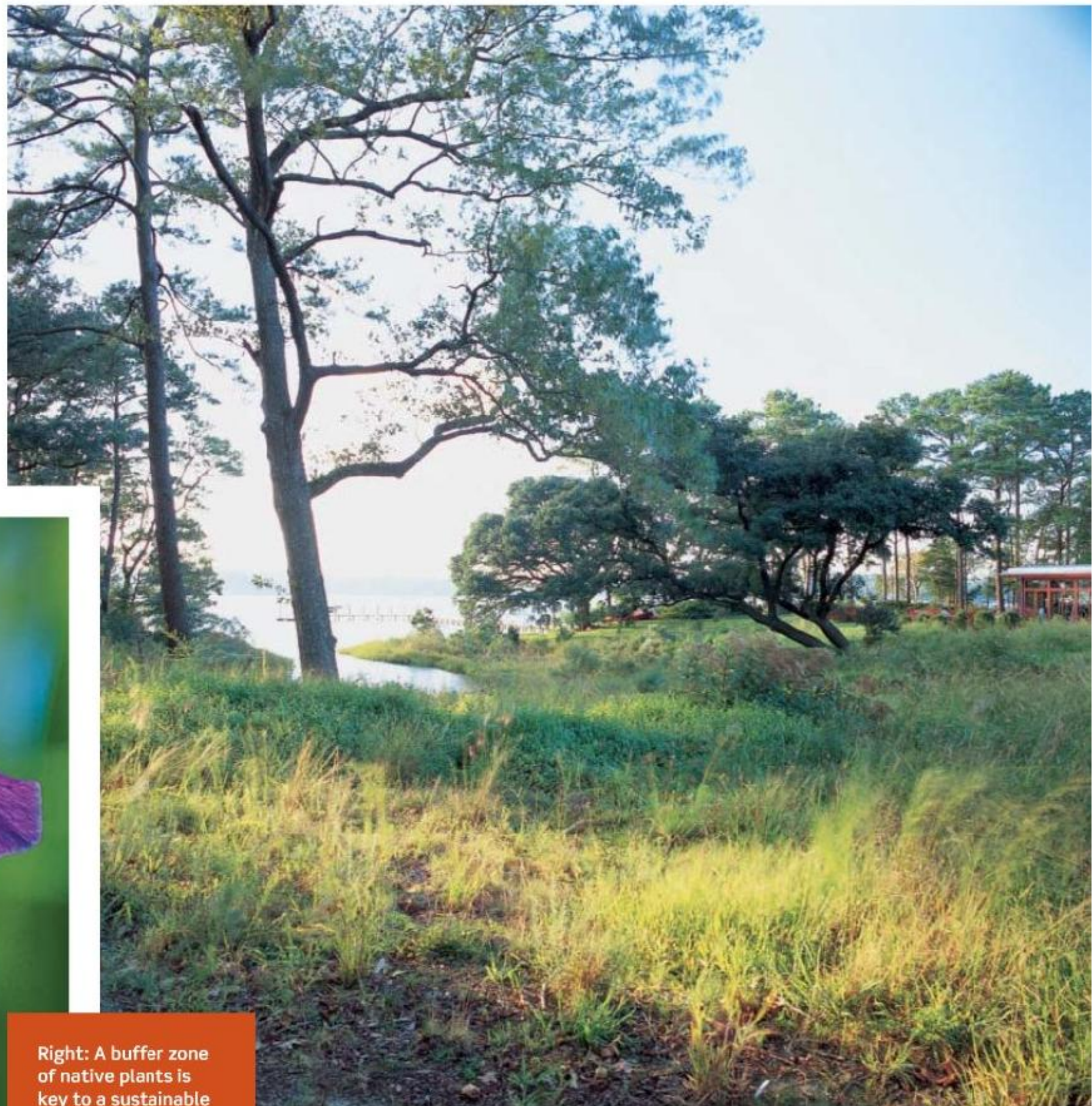



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Sustainable Shorelines

How smart eco-design can help protect our lakes, streams and bays

THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT LAKES, STREAMS, BAYS and other bodies of water reflect many of our environmental sins too clearly — or too murkily, to be more accurate. What happens on land sooner or later shows up in the water nearby. If you see an increase in green algae in a lake, chances are it's due to over-nutrification — the green stuff can have a feeding frenzy on fertilizers used on nearby lawns, farms and golf courses, which end up in the water. (According to "Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality," a guide published by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, just one pound of phosphorus can produce up to 50 pounds of algae.) Another potential lake wrecker is erosion. The





Right: A buffer zone of native plants is key to a sustainable shoreline, offering protection from runoff and erosion. Left: Water-loving blue flag iris adds color to the wetland.

LEFT: ROB CARDILLO; RIGHT: RICHARD FELBER

fragile boundary between water and land gets hit from both directions: runoff from inland and wave or tide action from out in the deeps. Without protection, banks will be undercut and earth will slip away.

Happily, a new generation of landscape architects, ecologists and other design professionals are seeking answers — beyond the more conventional shoreline riprapping or bulkheading. Though these rock and concrete options may help with erosion, they do nothing to stave off the summer algal green-up, and don't typically come off looking very natural.

"Nature provides the best example to follow," says Fred Rozumalski, a landscape architect and ecologist who cowrote the Minnesota DNR guide. Though there is much that goes into making a healthier lake, stream or bay, Rozumalski says the most important things you can do are eliminate fertilizer and pesticides from waterfront lots and create a "buffer zone."



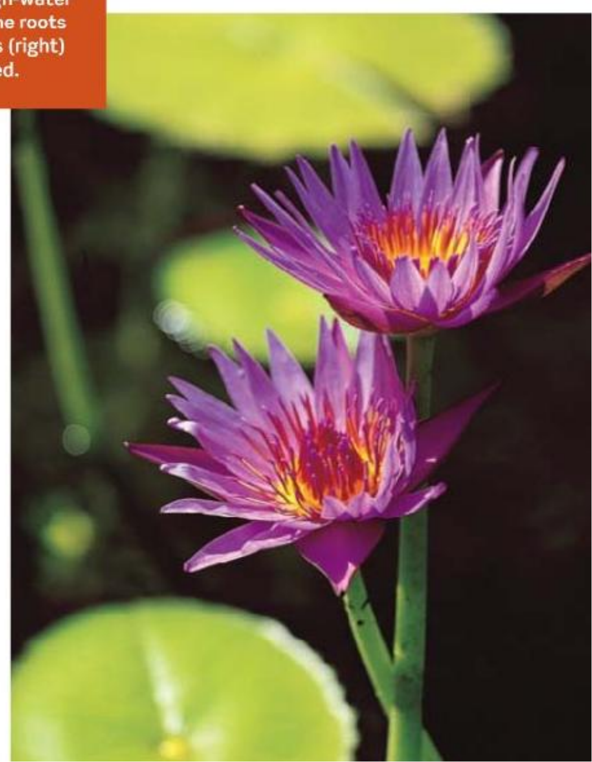
A buffer zone is a planted swath that extends from the shoreline both out into the water and up onto the shore. It is a simple solution that can improve wildlife habitat, help clean the water, stabilize the shoreline and still provide space for recreation. Designed as a colorful lush textural garden of native plants, a buffer zone can also look pretty nice.

There are essentially two ways of implementing a buffer zone: preservation or restoration. Rozumalski stresses keeping an existing natural shoreline intact. "Once that is destroyed," he says, "you can't bring it back to the same extent." So the best option is to let that native forest or grassland or savannah be your garden on the upland portion of the water's edge. For example, Fawn Ridge is a 16-lot development in central Minnesota where home sites are clustered on only eight of 50 acres, with the rest community-owned and left alone. "We didn't want to do something that looked unnatural," says Mark Ronnei, CEO of COTE Family Companies, the project's developer. In a shallow bay of Fawn Lake, Ronnei and I traversed, on a long dock, a nearly 250-foot expanse of existing

steps to a sustainable shoreline

- Re-envision the ground plane. Imagine your entire lot as an uninterrupted native landscape, not as a green plane of turf. Create a series of rooms and let the native landscape remain between them.
- View shoreline as a continuum. Contrary to common development practice, a water body does not give way to land along a well-defined line. There is a much more gradual transition with several different plant communities that dissipate wave action and slow runoff from the land. Plan to preserve or restore the entire continuum.
- Be careful with plants. Natural shoreline plants can be finicky, so make sure you're planting the right ones in the right part of the shoreline. The Minnesota DNR guide has a comprehensive list of plants that will likely work throughout most of the upper Midwest. Another source is *Life at the Water's Edge*, published by Clemson University. Rozumalski's favorites for both looks and functionality include sedges (specifically lake sedge, *Carex lacustris*), pickerelweed, great blue lobelia, blue flag iris and Ridell's goldenrod. At Tidewater, Byrd used saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*) and smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*); the latter, he says, is the most important Chesapeake Bay species, as it can handle the three-foot tidal fluctuations. He also likes wax myrtle, inkberry, itea, and the native shrubs *Iva frutescens* and *Baccharis halimifolia*.
- Try to keep naturalized shoreline on at least three-quarters of your frontage. The plantings should extend inland through the entire recommended water setback and into the water as deep as plants will (and naturally do) grow. Let the emergent vegetation hug the dock and beach closely.
- Remember aesthetics. Just because it's natural doesn't mean there is a prescribed plant palette. At Tidewater, Byrd planted a few different native species in long linear drifts. You could just pick a couple of your favorite plants and mix them into a seasonally changing massing. You could match the textures of water and land plants, creating a planting that seemingly submerges into the water. Take a guidebook to a nature area to identify specimens in the same habitat you'd like to have in your own garden.
- Don't over-clear. You can always remove more vegetation for activity areas and view corridors later (if your local codes allow it). There's no need to wipe the slate clean at the start of construction.

A buffer zone should extend from the shore into the water. Top: Great blue lobelia is best used just above the high-water mark while the roots of water lilies (right) are submerged.



emergent vegetation. We were walking on the project's only dock, which places a common mooring facility out beyond the native buffer zone. Inland, we walked through preserved forest on meandering trails. The homes, glimpsed through the woods, are all at least 150 feet back from the water.

Landscape architect Warren Byrd could probably get behind that project. He believes one of the most important factors in creating a healthier shoreline is to hold structures back. "Don't build to the water's edge," he advises. His firm, Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects designed the grounds at Tidewater, a Chesapeake Bay home that sits about 100 feet back from the most inland tip of a tidal cove. This project employed the second means of implementing a buffer zone: restoration.

Tidewater's cove, when Byrd arrived on site, was choked with invasive species and trash. Byrd oversaw selective clearing, subtle grading and extensive planting to re-create, essentially from scratch, a newly natural landscape. His inspiration? Existing, undisturbed shoreline. "The dynamic of the water's edge is what's so beautiful about the coastline," says Byrd. "If you have a property that has been compromised, go back and study sites that have not been."

But a buffer zone, you might counter, can block views of the water and may look too natural. To add a touch of the human hand, consider creating rooms in the natural landscape, or bold linear pathways. Carve space from the emergent vegetation out in the water to create a liquid room for a beach and a dock. Create strategic views from your home, pruning trees and shrubs but leaving the ground natural. The overall effect can be stunning, as at Byrd's Tidewater, which has won a national design award and has been profiled in *Garden Design* (April 2005).

Most important of all, slide the lawn back from the water's edge. Good landscape design tries to incorporate a variety of plantings for a variety of uses and scenic vistas. When it comes to the waterfront, a more natural planting scheme is the best fit. By creating a buffer zone of native plants at the water's edge, you can help keep your water from turning green. — **ADAM REGN ARVIDSON**

■ *Adam Regn Arvidson, ASLA, is a landscape architect and writer who specializes in ecological design and a deep understanding of site.*

TOP LEFT: ROB CARDILLO; BOTTOM LEFT: RICHARD FELBER

PLANT HUNTER BY DAN HINKLEY

The No-Snooze Summer

THE USUAL APPROACH TO HORTICULTURE, IF written in equation form would, sadly, read something like this: {long colorless winters} x {lack of connection to the natural world} + {visits to nurseries exclusively in spring} = gardens that stop entertaining much too early in the season. In our harried attempts to ace the melancholy of winter, our landscapes become top-heavy with plants that run out of gas by midsummer.

As I begin to deadhead the rhododendrons in June (OK, so who was deadheading rhodo-





Right: *Aster ericoides* 'Pink Cloud' bursts into a starry mass of flowers in September. Below: A purple form of *Cimicifuga simplex* with grasses and persicaria in a late summer planting by Dutch designer Piet Oudolf.

MARIANNE MAJERUS (2)



FROM EMILY ANN'S GARDEN
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dendrons before gardeners came along anyway?) and at last cut back the rancid foliage of the early bulbs, there are fortunately many underused plants just beginning the intricate floral pas de deux of attracting a butterfly, bee or hummingbird.

A shrub I anticipate in late July and early August is *Clethra barbinervis*, a hardy, deciduous shrub from the mountains of central Japan. Though North America boasts a number of clethra species, all of which are late to flower, I find the Japanese counterpart to be the best of the genus. Clusters of narrow racemes of white flowers with a K.O. fragrance are followed in autumn by red-orange foliage. As this 15-foot-tall shrub matures, it continues to engage the garden when its bark exfoliates in colors rivaling the best stewartia or lagerstroemia.

Most gardeners are keenly aware of hydrangeas, primarily through the oversize heads of the ubiquitous cultivars of *Hydrangea paniculata* and *H. macrophylla*, such as Endless Summer®. This genus is quite enormous, and includes a large number of under-explored vines and shrubs that decline to flower until late in the season. *Hydrangea heteromalla* is a favorite, with deep green leaves held to the stem by bright red petioles. The lacy disks of white flowers come into their finest in early August, yet the showing, as with many hydrangeas, extends far longer as the sterile florets shift to more opulent colors.

The latest of the hydrangeas to flower is *Hydrangea aspera* ssp. *strigosa*. This is a low-elevation variant of a variable species, frequently found throughout western China and the Himalayas. In 1998, I was able to collect cuttings from a mutant of this species at the base of Emei Shan in Sichuan Province, clad in flowers of the mophead persuasion rather than the naturally occurring lacecap type. I christened this 'Elegant Sound Pavilion' for the Buddhist temple nearby. I think it is a sensational plant (well, of course, I found it) for its ultra-tardy, corpulent clusters of flowers opening in tones of chartreuse, blanching to pure white and retreating again to a smart green by late October. It will never become as popular as Endless Summer®, as its low-elevation residency will not translate to zones under 7.

As long as I am venturing beyond the reach of the majority of gardening Americans, I must mention *Dichroa febrifuga*. This is an evergreen shrub so closely allied to the genus hydrangea that hybrids have recently been produced between it and *H. macrophylla*. To five feet in height, the clusters of blue flowers appear in mid to late summer, conjuring the essence of an understated hydrangea. The results, however, are far from similar. Clusters of electric violet blue, fleshy fruit are held unblemished through the lion's share of winter in temperate climates. This is currently being marketed, incorrectly, as a shrub suitable for Zone 4; perhaps it is, but only if you are bedding it out like marigolds.

Enough of the woodies. The genus Cimicifuga (currently undergoing a name change to Actaea) remains underused. I have long been patriotically infatuated by our native *Cimicifuga racemosa*, *C. americana* and *C. rubifolia* for their bold clumps of foliage and early-summer to midsummer spires of white flowers. However, one will find that the Asian species are significantly later to flower than their American counterparts.



A carpet of marbled heart-shaped leaves emerges after *Cyclamen hederifolium* has flowered in late June, adding interest to the fall and winter garden. A useful plant for ground cover under trees.

MARIANNE MAJERUS

Cimicifuga simplex, which a stubborn nursery trade continues to sell as *C. ramosa* (which has never existed), is a snakeroot that delays its jump into the reproductive ring until early to mid-August, sending aloft erect, narrow, white racemes that lend to a warm summer's evening a scent too enchanting to believe. It has become popularized by a few purple-foliaged selections (most notably 'Brunette' and 'Hillside Beauty'), which are, in my mind, faultless.

Later still is *Cimicifuga dahurica*, hailing from the Korean peninsula north to Manchuria. It is rare in its tribe for possessing individual male and female plants. The male flowers, wishing to avail themselves most efficiently of the wind, their pollen disperser, present themselves in wide, airy racemes of white on stems to eight feet, while the female plants appear as different as Venus with narrow stiff armatures designed to carry expanding seed capsules. For pure ornamental value, I would side with my gender.

Sensing a respite from the warmest days of August, the first delicate flowers of *Cyclamen hederifolium* push dirt, filling the void left by the late-June evacuation of the foliage. This late-summer-blossoming species is much hardier than most realize if it's provided an

adequate depth beyond the reach of hard frost. Though I have not verified it, I have been told by a reputable Midwest gardener that mature corms can be planted as deep as two feet and still emerge to blossom. A new batch of heart-shaped, colorfully mottled foliage emerges after flowering is finished.

Aster divaricatus, the wood aster, is as convivial a plant as one could possibly desire. Its clumping nature and swarthy divaricated stems to 15 inches add a textural effect to its preferred position of dry shade to warrant inclusion in the garden palette. And when glittering with tiny white flowers in late July through August, it is irresistible. So too is *Aster lateriflorus* var. *horizontalis* 'Prince', which produces dense rounded orbs of black-purple foliage to 18 inches, extinguished in mid-August by a bedaubing of tiny white, red-eyed flowers. Equally good from the same species is 'Lady in Black', though it is taller, to four feet, and more lax. I have put the latter to good use as a tall groundcover in my full sun "meadow" in Indianola.

I recall my first meeting with *Colchicum speciosum* in the wilds of northeast Turkey as being one of the most memorable botanical encounters in my life. Little had I realized that the relentless rains of the first weeks of our adventure would culminate in this silver lining, as the mountain meadows transitioned to a miles-wide carpet of pink.

In the Pacific Northwest, a day or two of gentle rain in mid-August is the wake-up call for the colchicums. It is also the perfect time to lift the ever-increasing clumps of bulbs — while in flower — and divide for greater effect. The caveat to their use in the garden arises from their beefy foliage that, when dying off in early June, does not do so gracefully. Perennials, still in fresh spring fashion, can too easily be sullied with the colchicums' decrepit and yellowed foliage.

Though perhaps it's not overly creative, I use colchicums in tree circles rather than in mixed plantings. The spring and summer effects of the trees are long over by the time the groundswell of blossom begins, and the cleanup of the foliage in its early-summer dormancy is straightforward.

A few plants selected for their off-season effects are all that's needed to bridge the ebullience of spring to the richness of autumn and early winter. This missing link unifies the year and completes our gardens.



This stunning steel staircase converted a 40-foot drop in elevation between the street and the front gate from liability to asset. The wide-stepped path of limestone gravel invites visitors past raised planters overflowing with silver pony foot, cape rush, yuccas, agaves, grasses and more.



BEST WESTERN

The tough-but-beautiful Texas native landscape was key to this contemporary, eco-conscious garden designed to embrace a brand-new family home

BY EMILY YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE GUNTHER





HILLSIDE HOMES CAN BE TRICKY TO BUILD. THEY CAN ALSO BE TOUGH TO landscape. Such was the case with the garden around a soaring stone, wood and steel house in central Texas. The three-acre lot not only sloped sharply but was exposed to full sun, vulnerable to deer, and, over the course of construction, scraped clean as a whistle. Under these conditions, creating a dramatic pedestrian approach and kid-friendly outdoor spaces would have been challenging enough. But landscape designers Selena Souders and Dylan Robertson of Big Red Sun in Austin also found artful ways to weave the natural environment around the man-made, leaving the impression of a Hill Country habitat barely touched.

Left: Mexican weeping bamboo moves in the wind behind a static grid of pavers. Center: Water flows over the limestone wall of the pool, accentuating the steepness of the site. Right: The man-made landscape, bounded by columnar Italian cypress trees, merges with surrounding native oaks.

"The idea was to come up with a unique transition that was restorative, something a little wild and woolly at the perimeter, like the surrounding hills, but more controlled closer to the house," Souders says. "We wanted to design something that, once you made your way from the street to the front door, made you think: 'Aah, home!'"

Pivotal to that sense of journey is a stylized stair-

CREATURE **COMFORTS** DOMINATE THE BACKYARD — AN



case that descends from the street to the front gate 40 feet below. Fashioned from thin plates of raw carbon steel, the stairway doubles as retaining wall and planter. Broad steps and landings of pale limestone gravel, set off by the dark rusting metal, unfold between clusters of gray-green drought-tolerant trees and plants: shoestring acacias, Little Ollie® dwarf non-fruiting olives, spiky yuccas and agaves, cape rush, grasses such as Mexican feather grass and alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), and cascades of silver pony foot (*Dichondra argentea*). As entrances go, it doesn't get much grander than this.

"The welded steel plates were left unfinished so they'll rust," Souders says, noting how the weathered panels of dark burgundy, brown and orange make green, gray and silver foliage stand out. "Steel is timeless. It's also a sustainable and cost-effective way to cover so much ground."

A grid of limestone, both crushed and in rough-hewn sheets, spans the front yard, bisecting a planted island in the circular driveway and continuing to the covered walk at the front entry. Sedges, variegated sweet flag, persicaria and creeping ruellia sprout from the path like volunteers. "We wanted plants to create drama and help tell the story,

ELEVATED SWIMMING POOL SURROUNDED BY **MULTIPLE** PATIOS



Regrading the slope alongside the house created flat terraces for entertaining. The three immaculate strips of mowed zoysia contrast sharply with wilder parts of the garden, which are intended to blend seamlessly with the native landscape beyond the property.

STEEL PLATE **EDGING** TRANSFORMS THE GREEN EXPANSE INTO A





"WE WANTED PLANTS TO CREATE **DRAMA** AND HELP



so they pop up here and there," Souders says. Next to the house, the garden becomes more manicured, with low-water 'Winter Gem' boxwood hedging and 'Mutabilis' roses defining a secret garden for the owners' children. A row of cloudlike Japanese black pines (*Pinus thunbergiana* 'Thunderhead'), spires of Italian cypress and several steel-plate, saucerlike vessels filled with aloes and rosemary heighten the formality.

Around the side of the house, broad sweeps of zoysia grass provide uninterrupted lawn for the kids and the family dog. Steel-plate edging, a visual echo from the front yard, transforms the velvety green expanse into a kind of minimalist art installation. Farther on, a slightly shaggier meadow of buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) gives way to the untamed periphery of the garden, where Italian stone pines and Mexican sycamores provide a privacy belt. "Everything we did here — from using regionally appropriate stone to native plants — was intended to produce a naturalistic line that leads the eye into the woods," Souders

Opposite: A lush bed of pindo palms, buddleia, bush germander, dwarf pomegranates and rosemary anchors the back of the house, with its double-height walls of glass, to the ground. Planters of zinc-coated sheet metal and rusting steel trim echo the vertical lines of the towering stone piers.

ILLUSTRATION: BRENDA WEAVER

TELL THE STORY, SO THEY **POP UP** HERE AND THERE"





says. Creature comforts dominate the backyard. The centerpiece is an elevated swimming pool surrounded by multiple dining and sunbathing patios whose varied layout and scale offset the height of the three-story house. The pool features twin falls that spill into a catch basin, filling the outdoor living space with the sound of water and providing incentive to explore the grounds below. Carefully chosen materials, like the non-reflective ipe decks, and a range of tough plants — pindo palms (*Butia capitata*), buddleias, dwarf pomegranates and rosemary — cool and soften the hardscape, as do the seasonal blooms of cosmos, verbena and lobelia. Another zoysia lawn and a stand of Mexican weeping bamboo form a verdant backdrop for the nearby spa.

With their meticulous attention to detail, Souders and Robertson turned a blank canvas into a handsome setting almost indistinguishable from the indigenous vegetation beyond the property line. By planting natives to follow the contours of the land, they've put the garden in pleasing and proper context. "We worked to strike a balance of things that are refined and things that look like they could've popped up from a bird seeding them," Souders says. "The existing vegetation influenced us a lot. It's a look we appreciate and embrace." — **EMILY YOUNG**

Left and right: Saucerlike steel vessels function as beacons in the garden, guiding visitors from one point to another. When viewed from above, the steel virtually disappears, leaving the spotlight on the plants. Center: Clipped evergreens contrast with sprawling shrubs coming up through gravel areas.

■ *For more information, call 310-433-0019 (Venice, California) or 512-480-8008 (Austin, Texas) or see bigredsun.com.*



steeling the show

When Dylan Robertson first saw work by California artist Robert Irwin and Arizona architect Rick Joy using rusting carbon steel to produce pieces of industrial power and beauty, he knew he'd found a perfect medium for Big Red Sun landscapes. Today Robertson, the firm's principal designer, is adept at transforming plates of hot-rolled steel into retaining walls, planters, staircases, edging, decorative cladding and the large sculptural planters that have become a company signature.

GARDEN DESIGN: Why do you like using steel plate?

DYLAN ROBERTSON: I love the way oxidized steel reads as a raw, honest, earthy material. Because of its ruddy color, it looks like big blocks of soil that have been pulled up from the ground. I can also create retaining walls that have the same structural integrity as concrete or stone despite the thin material.

GD: But isn't there more than meets the eye to some of your minimalist creations?

DR: For retaining walls, there's an intricate substructure of steel piers and beams. But that's below grade and you don't see it.

GD: What are the advantages and disadvantages?

DR: The graphic quality is very appealing. It's visible when viewed from the side but almost disappears when viewed from above. It doesn't call attention to itself the way an eight-inch-wide stone wall does. On the downside, the sheets are very heavy, and the cost has increased dramatically over the years.

GD: Given the rusting, what's the lifespan of steel outside?

DR: Rust is degradation, and degradation compromises strength, but for steel to rust all the way through will take more than decades.

GD: Is steel plate a material anyone can tackle?

DR: Every town has steel suppliers where you can get different-sized plates. Anybody can buy them. Homeowners wanting to weld two pieces of steel together can pick up a book on welding, rent a little wire feed welder from a home-improvement store and start practicing. Pretty soon, they'll be welding shovels to the top of poles and anything else they can get their hands on. —**EY**

fern fancy

BY JENNY ANDREWS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WHITTLE

Emerging from supporting roles as masses of background greenery, ferns can hold their own as centerpieces, indoors or out

PRIMITIVE YET SOPHISTICATED, FERNS PREDATE DINOSAURS AND FLOWERING PLANTS, THEIR 300 million years on the planet a clear indication of their adaptability and durability. Settling into niche habitats — damp shade, rock crevices, attached to trees — where many plants wouldn't grow, ferns thrived. Most of the approximately 12,000 species are native to tropical forests; about 1,000 are from temperate climes. Typically easy to grow, the majority of ferns need three things: shade (dappled or with bright, diffused light, not total darkness); loose, rich soil with good drainage; and (for most) soil that never dries out. A longtime fixture in homes and gardens, ferns' relegation to a supporting role has recently given way to star status, recalling the unabashed fern craze during the Victorian period. Shown here as individual fronds to emphasize texture, shape and subtle color, this tip-of-the-iceberg sampling reveals that ferns possess a structural quality as beautiful as any flower.



HERE: Coin-size leaflets of silver dollar maidenhair fern (*Adiantum peruvianum*) dance along ebony stems in graceful sprays of foliage. New leaves are pinkish tan with a metallic sheen. Native to South America, it requires bright, diffused light and high humidity. *Perla vase from Z Gallerie, $49.95.*



HERE: The only truly golden Boston fern, *Nephrolepis exaltata* Rita's Gold™ introduced by Randolph's Greenhouses near Jackson, Tennessee, glows like a fireworks display from a container or hanging basket. A Way Hot 100 winner in the March 2007 issue. *Petal Orb vase from Chive, $32.*
CENTER: The dainty Korean rock fern or tsus-sima holly fern (*Polystichum tsussimense*) has slim fronds about a foot long, dark green with black veins. Hardy to Zone 6. Courtesy Big Dipper Farm. *Vega bud vase by Baccarat from Neiman Marcus, lead crystal, $330.*
FAR RIGHT: Bold textured and powder blue, the blue bear's-paw fern (*Polypodium aureum* 'Mandianum') has fingerlike leaflets on one- to two-foot leaves emerging from furry rhizomes. A carefree interior plant for a pot or hanging basket. Needs shade to maintain its blue color; keep evenly moist but not wet. *Klume vase from Crate and Barrel, $39.95.*












HERE: Very un-fernlike in appearance, blue fern (*Microsorum thailandicum*) has long narrow leaves curled under at the tip, dark green with a mesmerizing iridescent blue sheen. Epiphytic in its native Southeast Asia, it grows on limestone rocks. Adaptable to a basket or terrarium, it needs warmth (70 to 80 degrees F) with high humidity. *Pacific Blue Evolution vase by Waterford from Neiman Marcus, $350.*

TOP LEFT: Leathery, crinkled leaves lend texture to *Blechnum brasiliense*, and bronzy new foliage brings a pop of color. Grows to six feet or so on a short trunk. Adds Jurassic appeal indoors, or outdoors in Zones 9 and warmer. Courtesy Central Florida Ferns. *Taiga Flow vase from Chive, amber frosted glass, $17.*

TOP RIGHT: A sinuous frond of a new silvery Japanese painted fern from Terra Nova Nurseries, *Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum* 'Wildwood Twist'. Hardy in Zones 4 to 9. Courtesy Big Dipper Farm. *Large Zen vase from Crate and Barrel, $10.95.*

BELOW RIGHT: Oversize glossy leaves of bird's-nest fern (*Asplenium nidus*), up to five feet long, form a bold vase-shaped cluster for a shady area in a sunroom, or add warm-season drama to a container outdoors. *Swoon carafe from Crate and Barrel, $24.95.*

BELOW LEFT: Elegant yet lively, silver brake (*Pteris argyraea*) has whitish stripes on deeply divided leaves and an overall bluish cast. Hardy outdoors in shady Zone 9 and warmer locations; otherwise an easy houseplant. Courtesy Central Florida Ferns.



HERE: A new frilly form of Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata* 'American Fantasy') that forms a dense, compact mass of lacy foliage. Easy indoors, or outdoors during the warm season. Courtesy Central Florida Ferns. *Sails bud vase by Kosta Boda, from Neiman Marcus, $275.*
TOP RIGHT: A cloud of small leaflets dangling from threadlike ebony stems distinguishes the maidenhair ferns from coarser-textured cousins. *Adiantum raddianum* 'Gracillimum' is one of the daintiest. Water well but provide good drainage. Hardy in Zone 10 and warmer, or grow indoors. Courtesy Central Florida Ferns. *Large Deluxe Arch vase from Chive, $15.*
BELOW RIGHT: Deep green, leathery, one- to two-foot fronds of autumn fern (*Dryopteris erythrosora*) are evergreen, adding much-needed winter interest to the woodland garden. In spring, new leaves emerge coppery pink. Hardy in Zones 5 to 8. *Round Spring vase from Crate and Barrel, $19.95.*





SOURCES:

FOR VASES Chive: 416-595-1055, chive.ca. Crate and Barrel: 800-967-6696, crateandbarrel.com, or check with local store. Neiman Marcus: 888-888-4757, neimanmarcus.com, or check with local store. Z Gallerie: 800-908-6748, zgallerie.com, or check with local store. **FOR PLANTS** Big Dipper Farm: 360-886-8133, bigdipperfarm.com. Central Florida Fems (wholesale only): 407-889-2690, southeasternnursery.com. Randclph's Greenhouses: 731-422-2768, randolphsgreenhouses.com.



Here: Succulents and thyme flowering in a clay pot lend Julie Milligan's terrace an exuberant Mediterranean ambience. Right: Milligan custom-designed many of the furnishings for her terrace, and enhanced this daybed from Pottery Barn by draping it in sheer mosquito netting.

urban safari

Exterior designer Julie Milligan brings the romance of Mediterranean travel and style to a series of outdoor rooms on her Santa Monica terrace

BY DONNA DORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE GUNTHER



"I WANT TO EVOKE THE SENSE OF **FARAWAY** PLACES"





WHEN JULIE MILLIGAN WON A *GARDEN DESIGN* GOLDEN TROWEL AWARD IN 1999, her Santa Monica, California, terrace was a lush plant-driven garden grown in containers. But as her taste evolved, so did her terrace. Radically reducing the number of pots and redesigning those left to line the outer walls of the terrace like a hedge, over time Julie transformed her wraparound terrace into a series of outdoor entertaining rooms glamorously furnished in an array of Mediterranean styles. Now as you walk from room to room, you find yourself on a kind of urban safari traveling from one imaginary Mediterranean coastal town to another, the air against your cheek under the bright afternoon sun.

Every room inside opens to a parallel room outdoors through French doors, making for a chic, airy apartment completely open to outdoor living. Entering the apartment through the living room, for example, allows an instant view of the outdoor dining terrace just beyond, and with both rooms dressed in elegant whites, each benefits from the ambience of the other. Outside, Julie has defined the space by tenting it with white



Far left: A penguin martini shaker doubles as a vase for kumquats. Center: Glassware and green grapes accent the dining table. Below: Glamorous and pristine white, the dining area matches a contemporary JANUS et Cie balance table with 18th-century French chairs.





An elephant chair set between teak chaises from India forms the basis of a lounging area right off the bedroom. Pygmy palms, containers and Moroccan accessories further the Mediterranean ambience, while a daybed tucked in a corner adds a seductive note.

“YOU CAN REALLY **WOW** PEOPLE WITH THE WAY YOU CONFIGURE



Here: Saint Tropez comes to Hollywood in the outdoor screening room. Julie upholstered her wraparound lounge in yellow and white Sunbrella fabric, and chose sustainable ipe for decking. A chimenea keeps the space warm at night. Right: A dinner party under the stars.

Sunbrella drapes hung from false walls built on either side of the room. A long hedge of olive trees planted along the terrace wall and pygmy date palms that further enclose the space with their tropical, sculptural forms all help set the tone of a garden room on the French Riviera.

After dinner, Julie is wont to invite her guests into her tented Mediterranean-styled getaway, right outside her bedroom door. In the morning she might read the paper here on a tented daybed tucked near terra-cotta pots that frame the view of the Pacific just beyond, and in the evening, a pair of deep, teak daybeds are just the place for after-dinner drinks. A few steps away, a built-in lounge is positioned for optimal viewing of a movie screen hung outside the doors of an intimate reading nook. Protruding structurally from the terrace like the prow of a yacht, the area could be a film salon for members of the nautical set. Call it St. Tropez via Hollywood — or just another of Julie’s homes not far away from home.

■ *For more information call 310-399-3908, or e-mail juliemilligan@mac.com.*

OUTDOOR **SPACE,** WITH WATER, FIRE AND THE FLOW OF AIR"





Left: We discovered this stone basin (*tsukubai*) at the Japanese Garden & Bonsai Nursery in Cornwall, England. A bamboo ladle laid across the top is ready for use. Right: Los Angeles-based Mia Lehrer + Associates helped execute this stone basin water feature designed by Ricardo Legoretta for a house in Beverly Hills. The piece was carved from a single piece of stone.



LEFT: ANDREA JONES; RIGHT: STEVE GUNTHER

liquid art

BY BILL MARKEN

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MOVING WATER THAT ALWAYS draws the eye — especially when it is an element in a striking fountain, urn, rill or other focal-point water feature. The seven water features shown on these six pages, ranging in style from traditional to contemporary, add soothing sounds and sparkling sights to a garden. And they show that a water feature doesn't need to gush gallons to make a powerful statement.




LEFT: STEVE GUNTHER; RIGHT: ANDREW LAWSON





Left: Bill and Debbi Wisher's cast concrete urn — custom-made as a fountain and stained beige, effecting a glistening quality as water pours over its edges — animates their Santa Monica garden. "The fountain is prominently sited on axis with the lawn, in view of the master bedroom window and a terrace on the opposite end of the yard," says landscape architect Pamela Palmer of Artecho, a Venice, California, design firm. Right: A meandering rill at Rousham House in Oxfordshire, England, was part of William Kent's original design of the grounds in the 1700s. Enlivening the path it divides, the water's movement underscores the path's use as a passageway.

Far left: A hauntingly beautiful rill at Shute House Gardens in Dorset, England, is part of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's 1969 design for water gardens commissioned by John and Suzy Lewis. Center: A sheath of water envelops a steel fountain by sculptor Simon Percival. Right: You can see this fountain from three rooms inside the house. "The house was existing, so we built plumbing into the wall and avoided tearing up the house," says Arizona landscape architect Steve Martino. "Rather than add just a spout to feed the water trough, we added a stylized shield that has a little crease of iridescent glass tiles to reflect light."





it takes all kinds Even without custom installation, the variety of available water features — trickling, spraying or gushing — is stunning. Here are some of our favorite fountains that can inhabit a unique place in the garden. ■ **WALL FOUNTAIN** to decorate a lonely wall or bring in a water element without taking up much space: Baroque wall shell, lead, florentinecraftsmen.com; French Rosette fountain, stoneforest.com. ■ **FREESTANDING FOUNTAIN** a grand gesture in the center of a lawn or a circular drive: Haddonstone Gothic fountain, English cast limestone, alfrescoliving.com. ■ **REPURPOSED ELEMENT** a beloved weatherproof object that can be instantly transformed into a prominent focal point in the garden: Maine millstone, retrofitted with a pump, mainemillstones.com; Asian glazed fountain pot conversion, eyeofthedaygdc.com. ■ **BASIN FOUNTAIN** with a pool to catch water beneath it, available in any size, to fit a tiny town garden or a large estate: Granite sphere with granite basin, charlestongardens.com. ■ **WATERFALL** contained in a single unit for use indoors or out: Napoleon waterfalls, steel or your own choice of materials, napoleonwaterfalls.com; Bluworld waterfall, customized for your space, bluworldusa.com.



LEFT: ANDREA JONES; MIDDLE: MARIANNE MAJERUS; RIGHT: LEE ANNE WHITE





Left: Cevan Forristt, designer of this outdoor living space in San Jose, California, creates architectural elements on site, including cast concrete columns that evoke ancient ruins. Right: Antique Chinese doors open to Forristt's concrete screen, inset with glass, copper, tiles and cast bamboo.

golden trowel winner

MIX MASTER

BY DONNA DORIAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARION BRENNER

CEVAN FORRISTT IS DEFINITELY A ONE-OF-A-kind sort of guy, and everything he does follows suit. Sure, he designs outdoor living spaces in and around San Jose, California, where he lives, but he doesn't call himself a landscape designer. Rather, he refers to himself as a site artist, who, instead of making paintings, sculpture or music, builds outdoor environments virtually by hand. "I want to help clients make their own country," says Cevan, who fuses the experiences and images he has gathered over years of travel in the Far East and Europe into unique, fantastical places. Here,







A Chinese empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) shades a concrete *recamier* that sits alongside the pool. The pool house, which like the pool was already on site, gets a tropical makeover with the addition of potted plants, like the weeping blue Atlas cedar, and cast concrete pillars that line the flagstone walk.







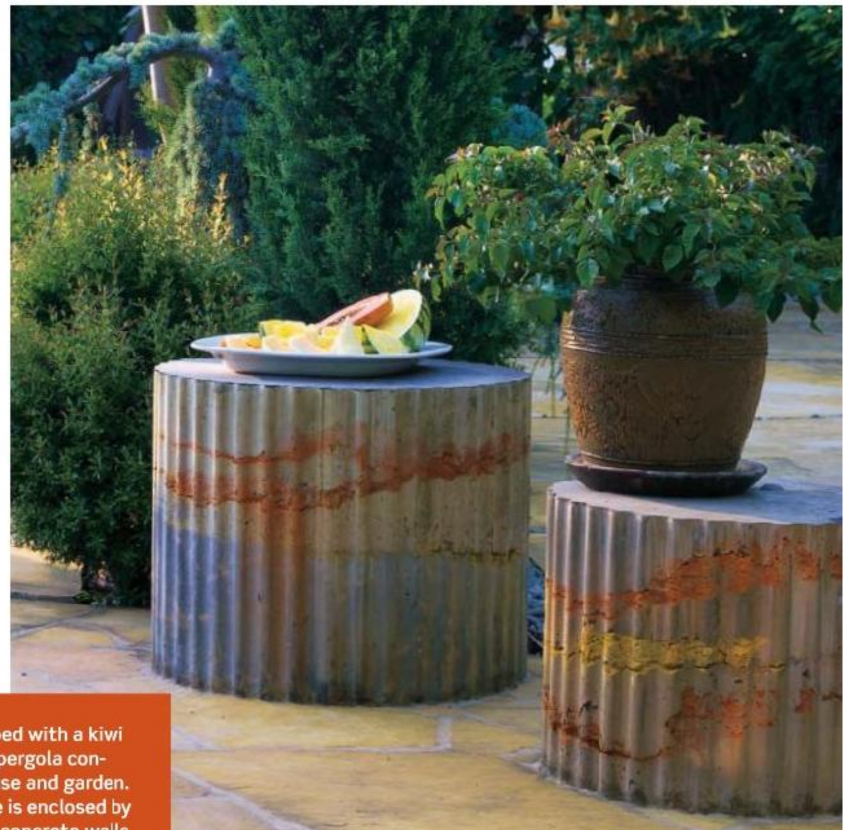
in this San Jose outdoor living space, concrete Italianate columns hold up a pergola, Balinese beds double as chaises, and an oversized, Parisian-styled concrete *recamier* all easily sit side by side. Says Cevan, "I want to take a place and artify it."

Even so, there isn't anything arbitrary about the environments he creates. When he was commissioned to design this space, Cevan asked his clients to give him two lists, one explaining what they wanted, the other stating what they definitely wanted to avoid. From those lists he came up with what he calls a "psyche-specific design" —which in this instance became a stage set for the young owners, both actors, who found themselves living in an imagined place — part Italianate, part Balinese, part Californian — altogether adaptable to living and entertaining out of doors.

When Cevan first started to make garden environments, he spent a lot of time reclaiming huge blocks of stone from old buildings. But all the heavy lifting and hauling took a toll on him and his crew, and eventually he realized he needed to make objects *in situ*. Concrete was the answer. Addressing it like a ceramist — texturing, decorating and shaping it into everything from columns to free-standing decorative screens, water features and walls — he counterbalanced this environment with bold architectural plantings, which look as though they could take over the place if left untended.

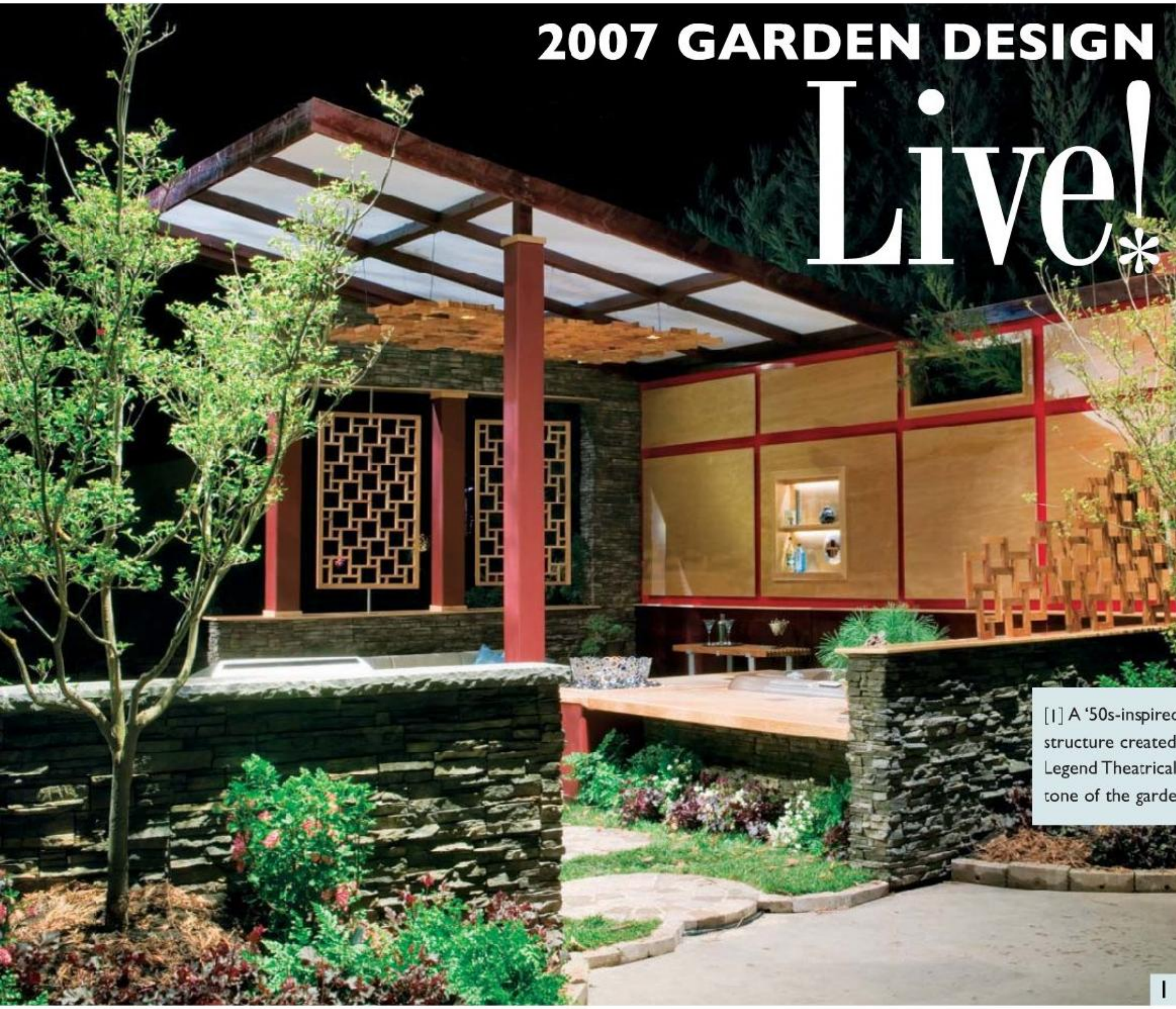
In this garden a pool and pool house were already in place, so by building concrete elements around them and decorating with everything from contemporary furnishings to Balinese antiques, Cevan created what he calls a Mediterranean/Moroccan entertainment pad — and a stage set where anything can happen.

For more information on Cevan Forristt, call 408-297-8538 or see forristt.com.



Left: Draped with a kiwi vine, the pergola connects house and garden. The space is enclosed by stuccoed concrete walls and a custom-designed water basin. The exotic feel is enhanced by two 19th-century Balinese beds, once used for storing rice. Right: Concrete columns act as plant stands and tables.

2007 GARDEN DESIGN Live!*



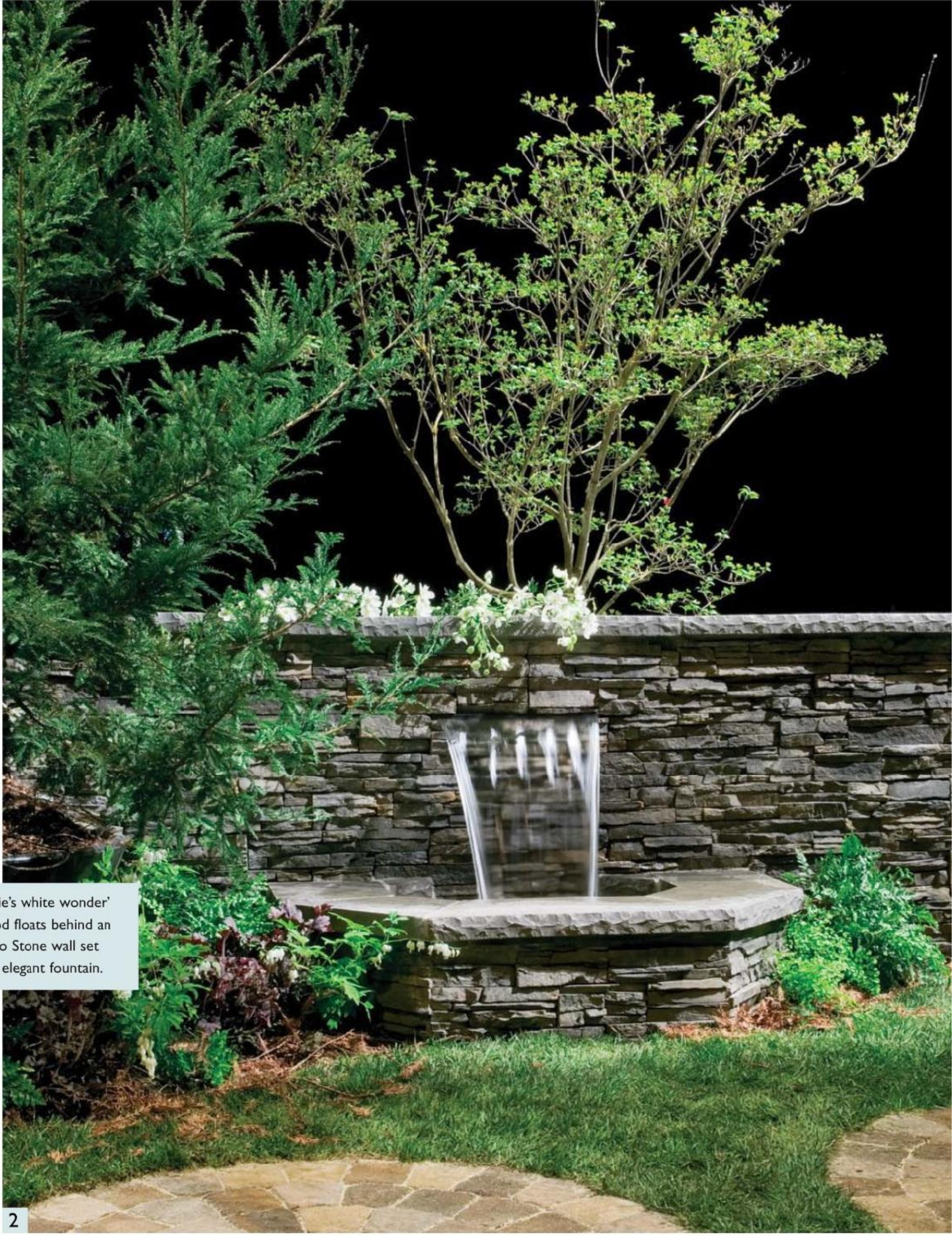
[1] A '50s-inspired shade structure created by Legend Theatrical sets the tone of the garden.

At the 2007 San Francisco Flower & Garden Show, *Garden Design* partnered with designer Michele Swanson and builder Lafayette Tree & Landscape, Inc. to create *Martini Modern*, this year's idea garden.

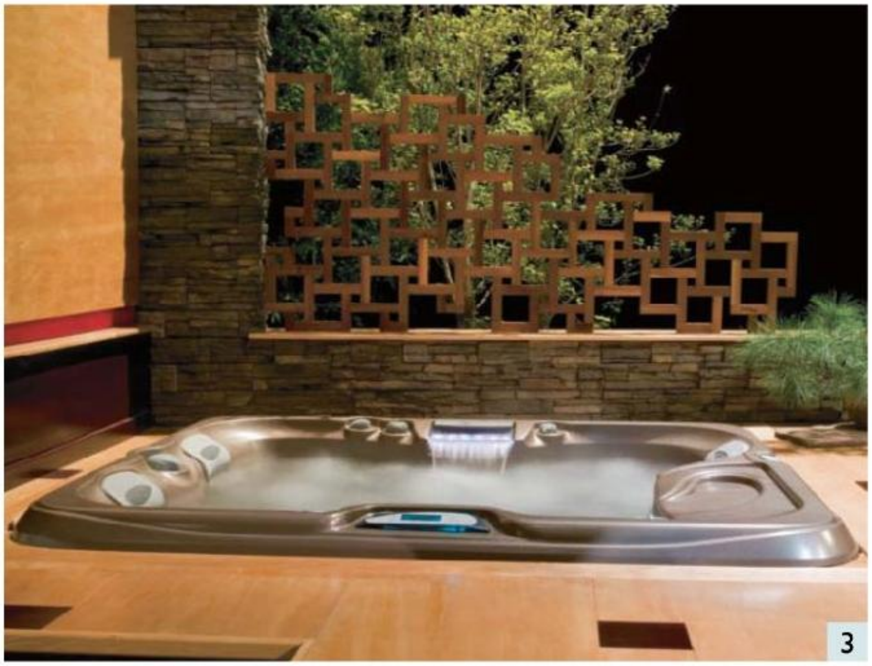
Photography by Gregory Case
Styling by Elena Morera

It's an unlikely combination — '50s modern styling meets redwood forest. Yet Martini Modern, our display garden at the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show, connects West Coast design heritage with gorgeous plant material (provided by Monrovia) common to the Bay Area to form a fun, livable, contemporary space that exudes California. Designed by Michele Swanson of Cultivate Art Design and built by Thomas Raeth of Lafayette Tree & Landscape, Inc., the garden was our fourth showing at this event.

"The garden reminds me of what some people have said about my work," says judge Steve Martino, a nationally recognized landscape architect from Arizona whose vote helped land *Garden Design* a gold medal. "It's groovy, cool and sexy.



[2] 'Eddie's white wonder' dogwood floats behind an Eldorado Stone wall set with an elegant fountain.





Underline the sexy. A bubbling hot Marin spa from Sundance Spas sets the tone for relaxing, laughing, undressing. Encased in a deck created by the set designers at Legend Theatrical, the champagne-colored spa brings enthusiastic movement to the otherwise serene garden.

Swanson balanced the heft of the built-in spa with a seating area and bar furnished with the Case Study collection by Modernica. The entire area is sheltered by an innovative clamshell roof, an homage to the '50s created by Legend Theatrical.

"When I was talking to Dave Dunning and Chad Harris at Legend Theatrical, the conversation led to an idea for an updated bachelor pad," says Swanson. "I wanted something that was strong and masculine but also inviting. The garden isn't really a family space — it is a grown-up's garden."

Matching Swanson's vision was Thomas Raeth's expertise in quality installation. The garden's walls were perfectly fashioned from Chapel Hill stacked stone veneer from Eldorado Stone. Eldorado's panel system creates the appearance of a hand-laid, dry-stack set. "I've used the product in many landscape projects — it has a naturalistic feel that works in many spaces," says Raeth. "We walled the entire garden with it and used it for the walls of the outdoor living



[3] A built-in Marin spa from Sundance Spas with LatticeStix as a backdrop.
[4] Deep seating from Modernica opposite the Sculpture grill by Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet and a Viteo table.
[5] Modernica's Case Study chair and side table displayed on a decorative circle of Oldcastle (Belgard) pavers.



6



7

[6] The garden's entry provides and clear view into the shaded lounge lit by LED Green Power. [7] The ultimate bachelor pad accessory, a Sculpture grill by Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet.

room as well."

It was important to Swanson that the living room structure not just repeat the past. "I wanted to move the lines forward, becoming a current statement of what retro can be," says Swanson. "I decided the structure should be both shelter and open to the stars."

Hence the open area above the hot tub, covered area over the seating area, and LatticeStix window panels that swivel. "All these elements echo the past but are current in their application," continues Swanson.

An intimate lawn of faux turf by Heavenly Greens is set with round and figure-eight-inlaid Belgard Dublin Toscana pavers from Oldcastle. The placement of the pavers establishes circulation through the garden, directing movement like a path from the entry, which is flanked by substantial planters from the Inner Gardens Multiple line, past the outdoor kitchen outfitted with a Sculpture grill from Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet, to a water feature opposite a quiet woodland area complete with a Modernica Museum bench perfect for sitting down and taking it all in.



Ferns, chamomile and a flowering hawthorn still thrive in the Experimental Garden that Mien Ruys (below right) designed at Dedemsvaart in the Netherlands in 1927.

The Dutch Genius

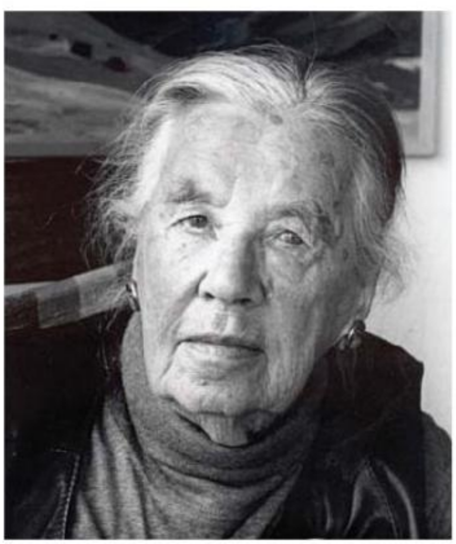
Mien Ruys: The grand dame of Dutch garden design who ignited the modern landscape movement in the Netherlands »

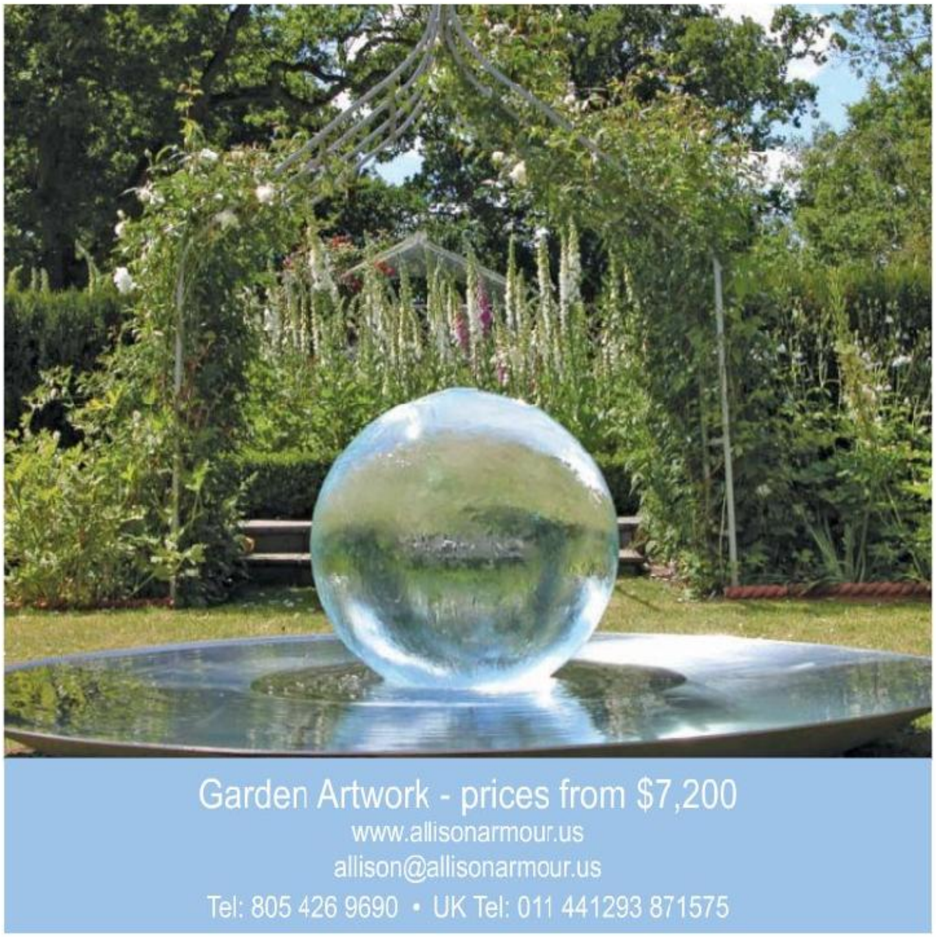
LEFT: HENK DIJKMAN; RIGHT: BERT NIENHUIS

MIEN RUYS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST INfluential Dutch garden designer of the 20th century. Complementing her vast knowledge of plants with modernist, abstract designs inspired by the ideals of the Bauhaus and the Dutch art and design movement De Stijl, Ruys (prounounced *rouse*) was one of the first designers to promote the use of perennial plantings in Holland, opening the door to the experimental thinking that distinguishes Dutch garden design today.

Ruys (1904-1999) was born to her vocation at her parents' then-world-famous Moerheim nursery at Dedemsvaart. Although the nursery supplied perennials to England and Germany, where the likes of Gertrude Jekyll and Karl Foerster were already championing their cause, perennials were then still a great novelty in the Dutch landscape. As her father propagated and sold perennials, Ruys began growing them to maturity to observe their needs and habits in the garden.

Impressed with his daughter's ingenuity, in 1924 her father gave Ruys a piece of his orchard on which to experiment. Recognizing their decorative value, she laid out old, worn-out concrete tiles from the nursery in a cross beneath the apple trees, then built a small square pond in the middle, eventually filling the space around it with a planting of lush foliage plants including rodgersia, kirengeshoma and darmera. Devoid of ornamentation, the design — with its sober clarity of line, its use of "found" and recycled materials, and its lush perennial plantings







— held all the key gestures of what would become her signature style: exuberant perennial plantings creating a counterpoint to unadorned modernist designs. Over the years, the "Wilderness Garden," as it came to be known, never lost its splendor, and along with two other gardens at Dedemsvaart, it was recently designated as a national monument by the Dutch government.

Shortly after creating her first garden, Ruys, considered a naïve young girl from the countryside, went to study garden design in Berlin, at Dahlen, the first school of its kind in Europe. There she was introduced to the world of art, and as she often recounted later, she became a socialist overnight after seeing a performance of Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. In the course of her studies, she also traveled to England and to other parts of Germany, and throughout her career she took inspiration from Gertrude Jekyll's perennial borders and from the people's parks of Germany, integrating those influences with her belief, culled from experiments at her own garden, that plants should be matched to their sites.

During her long lifetime, Ruys collaborated with all the leading Dutch architects, Gerrit Rietveld among them. Concentrating early in her career on large estates and small private gardens in which perennial borders played a prominent role, after World War II, she embraced the philosophies of the De Stijl masters who revolutionized Dutch art and design from 1917 to 1931, and created over a thousand gardens for office buildings, city halls, museums and hospitals.

Following her socialist convictions, after the war she joined the socialist government's rebuilding effort, designing community gardens for new housing developments throughout Holland. In keeping with Le Corbusier's notion that the house should be a machine for living, these gardens, sited in the courtyards between apartment complexes, functioned as environments for outdoor life — places where people in the community could walk, read and witness the beauty of nature.

In a country where gardens had historically been the sole province of the rich, Ruys in 1955 began an effort to educate the people and disseminate her ideas, leading the way by publishing the immensely popular gardening magazine *Onze Eigen Tuin* (Our Own Garden), which continues to this day.



HENK DIJKMAN

Mien Ruys, who pioneered the use of innovative materials in the garden, created plank bridges from recycled plastic in her Marsh Garden at Dedemsvaart.

Very few of Ruys' gardens remain intact, but the core of her work is maintained on the grounds of her garden in Dedemsvaart, which is composed of not one grand garden but a series of 28 small gardens. Ruys left the garden open to the public and led workshops in experimental gardening and design. Gardens that had fallen into disrepair have now been brought back to life by the landscape architecture team of Buro Mien Ruys. Having completed rooftop and water gardens at the site, as well as projects all over Holland, the team continues to further the modern experiment of garden design that Ruys ignited in the Netherlands almost a century ago. —**HENK GERRITSEN**

■ *For more information on the Mien Ruys Gardens, see mienruys.nl. Henk Gerritsen is among the leaders in planting design in Holland today. He is the designer and owner of the naturalistic Priona Gardens (prionatuinen.com) at Schuinesloot in Holland. His new book, tentatively entitled* Playing Chess With Nature, *will be available from architectura.nl in December 2007.*

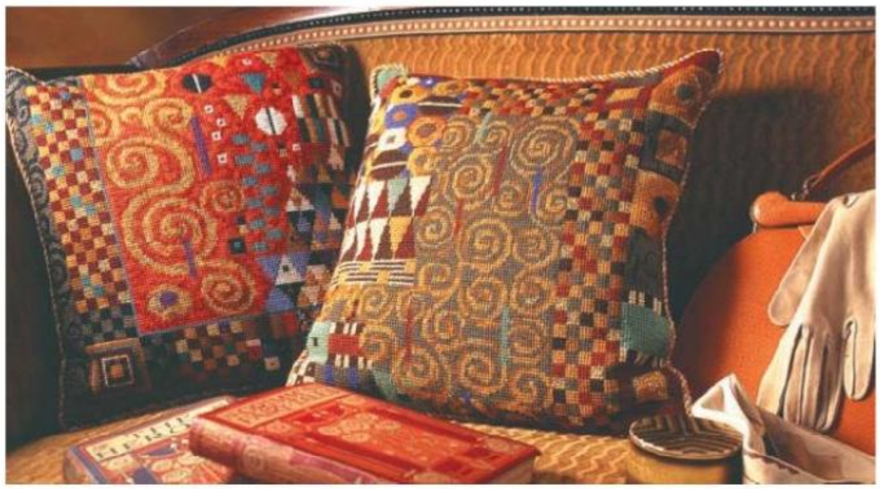
TOMORROWS HEIRLOOMS

Luscious Needlepoint from EHRMAN TAPESTRY



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RIGHT: **KLIMT: CORAL** AND **KLIMT:TAUPE**

Candace Bahouth was inspired by the wonderfully rich backgrounds she found in Gustav Klimt's paintings. She mixes gold thread with wools and merges blocks of color with swathes of oriental pattern to create these exotic pillows. They would fit equally well in a contemporary or traditional interior so why not add one of these breathtaking designs to your own living room? Measuring 14" x 14" they are all worked on 10 holes to the inch canvas. ~~$79.00~~ **now $68.00 each**



ABOVE: **NAXOS CAT**
RIGHT: **MARMALADE CAT**

Artist Elian McCready captures these cats with astonishing clarity. She has a painter's way with a needle and a true love of her subject. The 'Marmalade Cat' measures 18.5" x 14". While the 'Naxos Cat' is a little smaller at 16.5" x 13". Both are stitched on 10 holes to the inch canvas and they would make a perfect pair.
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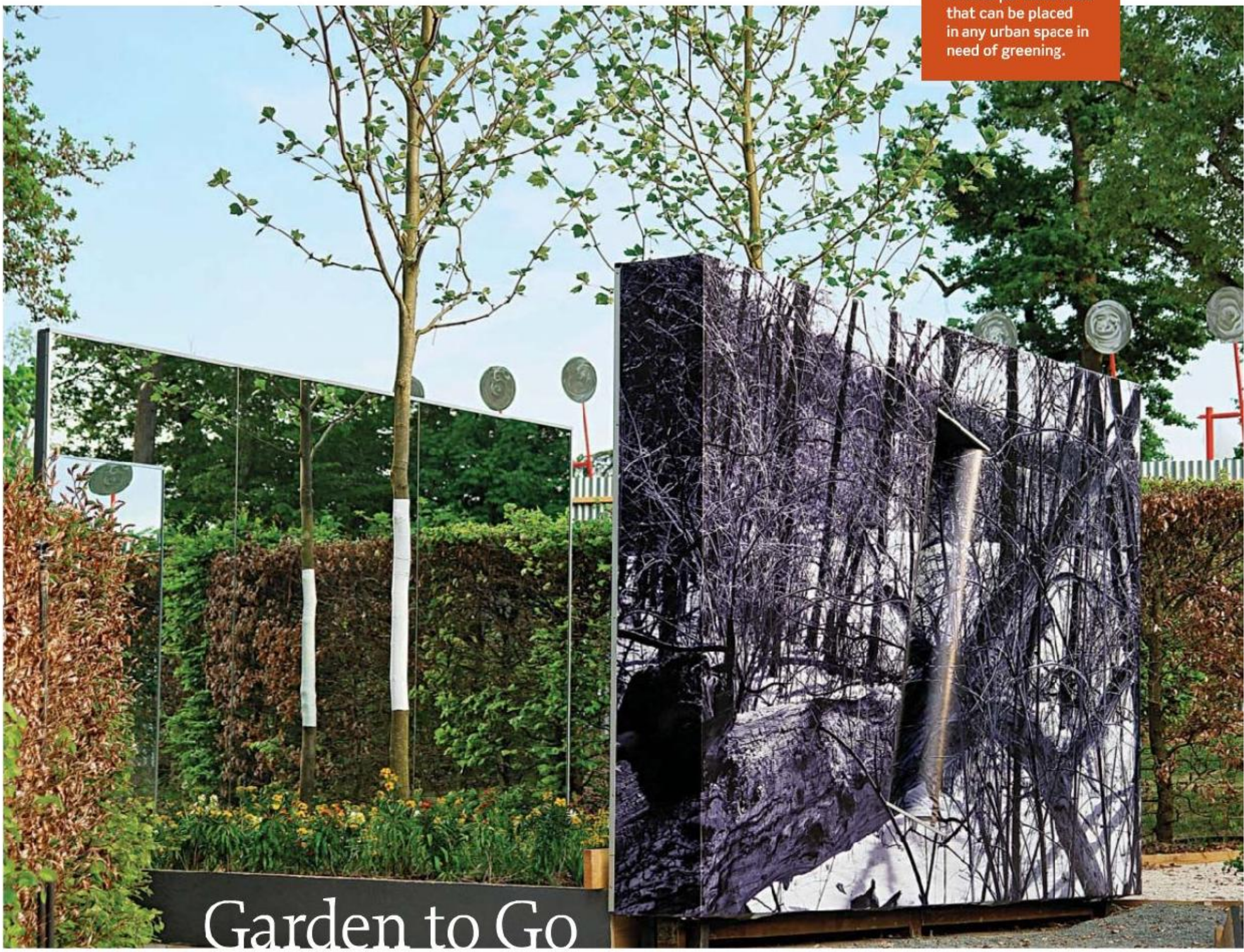
LEFT: **WHITE PEONY** CENTER: **PINK PEONY**
RIGHT: **CORAL PEONY**

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landscape

The Mitnick Roddier Hicks garden for the Chaumont 2007 International Garden Festival uses mirrors and a peephole to slant reality into an infinite portable allée that can be placed in any urban space in need of greening.



PHILIPPE PERDEREAU

Garden to Go

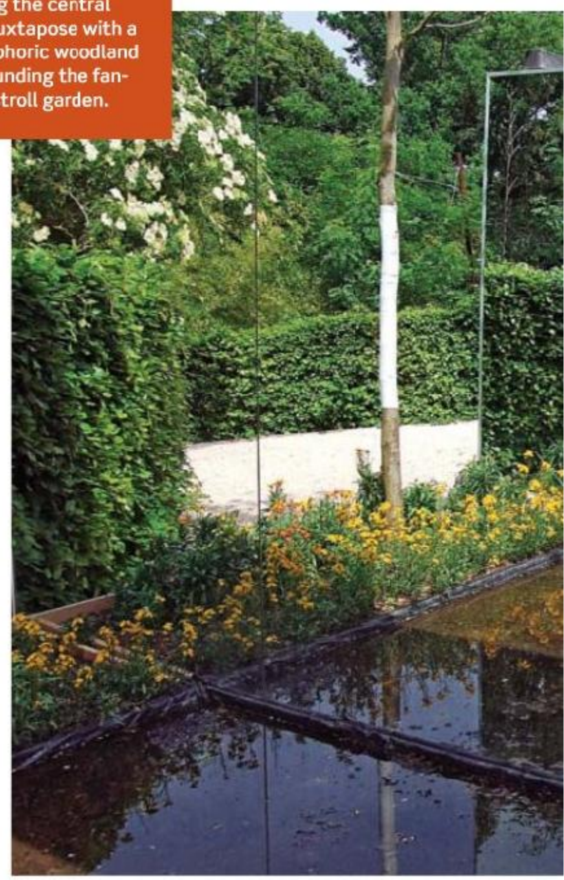
The American team at Chaumont ponders infinity in a small space, sponsored by *Garden Design*

WHEN MITNICK RODDIER HICKS DESIGNED A GARDEN FOR THE 2007 International Garden Festival, held in Chaumont-sur-Loire, France, the event's theme — mobility — ended up being addressed at its most literal. No symbolic moving parts, multi-tasking spaces or travel-inspired nuances for this dream team's landscape concept: Theirs is the only plan among the competition's winning entries that invites exploration of ways a

garden itself can be picked up and moved. The portable allée, made infinite thanks to strategically placed mirrors, garnered the Ann Arbor, Michigan, firm coveted exhibit space (sponsored in part by *Garden Design* magazine) at the annual festival. The event, held through October 14 on the grounds of a 15th-century chateau, features 26 cutting-edge display gardens by designers who won the "Mobiles! Gardens for a World in Motion" global challenge.

Mitnick Roddier Hicks comprises architects Keith Mitnick, Mireille Roddier and Stewart Hicks, who are also University of Michigan academicians. They were one of the few winning teams composed primarily of building, rather than landscape, designers and the only exhibitor from the United States. "For us, there isn't much interest in defining things as 'sculpture,' 'architecture' or 'landscape,'" Mitnick explains. "We have a set of ideas that we like to explore in different contexts, and we're happy to adapt them to whatever opportunities we encounter."

A shallow basin, reflected by mirrors, is a river flowing forever through an endless allée. The formal plantings edging the central pool juxtapose with a metaphoric woodland surrounding the fantasy stroll garden.



From any angle, Mitnick Roddier Hicks' semi-permanent installation (the festival lasts almost six months each year) defines itself through internal tensions. It blurs the lines between the opposing notions of formality and naturalism, luxury and frugality, endurance and the ephemeral. Gaining recognition for "deftly exploring the experience of framed views and spaces," as *Architecture Record* put it in 2005 when it named MRH among the year's 10 Design Vanguards, the firm has focused mostly on residential projects that share a likeness in thesis and style with their work at Chaumont. "We've recently built a folly at a museum in Tulsa and a new house in Ohio that have much in common conceptually and formally, even though they are very different types of work," Mitnick says, noting the same is true of the festival project, "where the conceptual ideas precede any presumptions about 'type' and traditional definitions about what distinguishes one design discipline from another."

Their design for Etant Donné, named from French-born dada artist Marcel Duchamp's final masterpiece, is a conceptual

CIPJP



"stroll garden to go," an imagined strip of designed landscape that can be rolled out onto any reasonably flat real estate in need of a little greening. (Mitnick reports that few other festival projects are similarly conceptually driven, to him a surprising trend at an event he calls "a fantastic venue for experimental work.") The nomadic garden idea evolved after first considering the mobility theme's "obvious answers and trying to avoid them," says Roddier, a native of France who's an architect with a landscape architecture background who had hoped to someday show at Chaumont. "Instead, we looked for the loopholes."

The Etant Donné garden braids classic French formality with natural woodsy elements. André Le Nôtre's take on the painterly vanishing point is exemplified to the nth degree with mirrored walls that bookend a sycamore allée, making it appear endless. A peephole, inspired by the ones Duchamp used in his life-size diorama, hides the viewer's reflection so it won't destroy the illusion. "The mirrors were not the goal; they are simply the artifice," Roddier notes. White gravel on paths creates contrasting void, and still water framed in a rectilinear basin provides a horizontal reflecting plane for overhead foliage and the changing sky. (The one-inch-deep black-gravel-bottom pool, which gives the impression of a river running through the allée, was one of the installation's trickier parts; the steel basin had to be perfectly fabricated and placed exactly level, a task festival workmen handled with aplomb.)

The design operates on four main levels: the "real" garden, with tangible architecture and plantings; the image of a garden, as seen in the shadowy blue-black and white winter-scene photomural (taken in a woodland in Michigan); the illusion of a garden, as reflected in mirrors; and the imagery of a garden — one in which people and nature provide animation — that can be transported to a parking lot or other dismal urban space. No garden is static. But dig deeper into Etant Donné — a moveable feast for the senses — and you'll uncover more layers of contrast and moving symbolism. —**LAUREN GRYMES**

■ *For more information, see chaumont-jardins.com or mitnickroddierhicks.com.*

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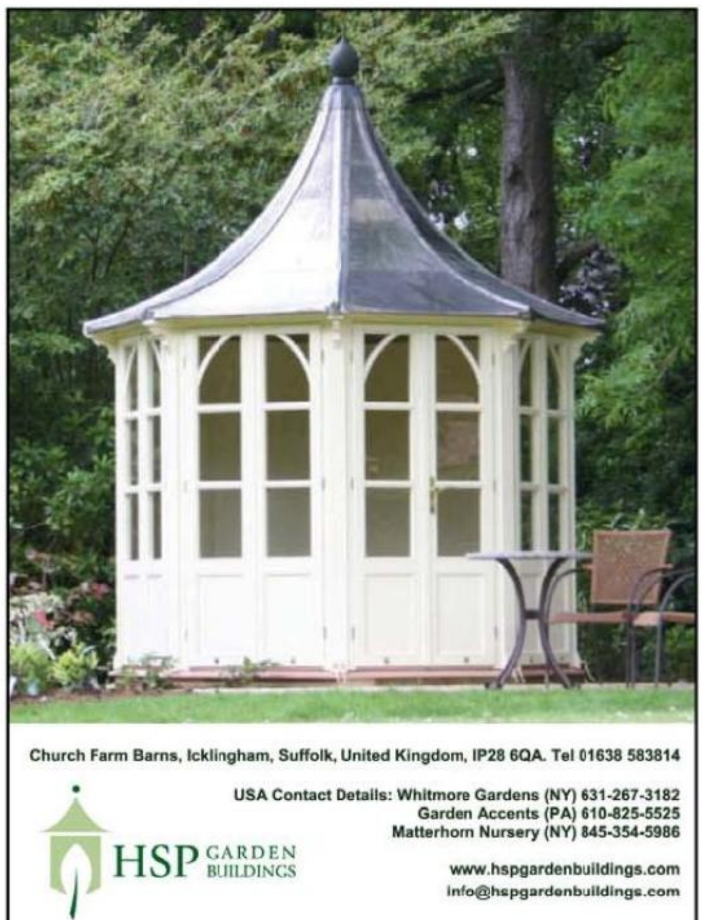

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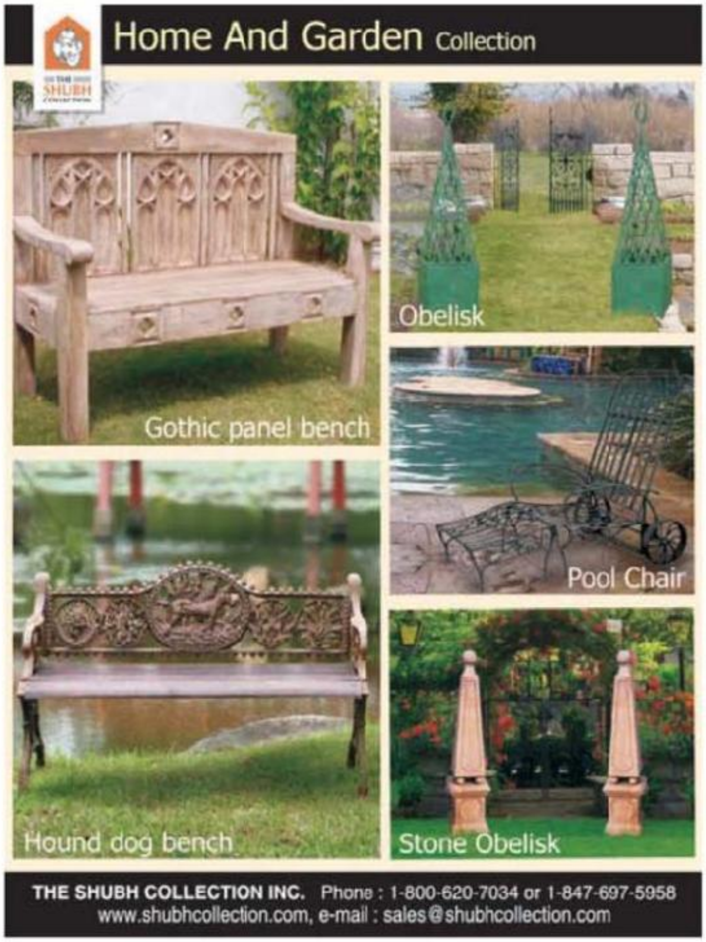

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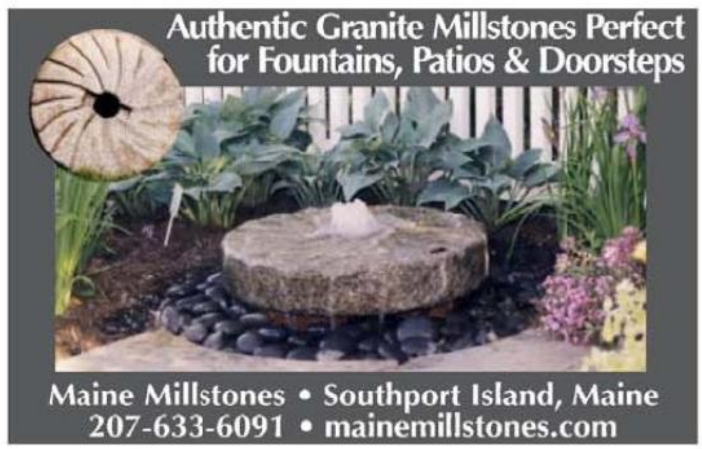

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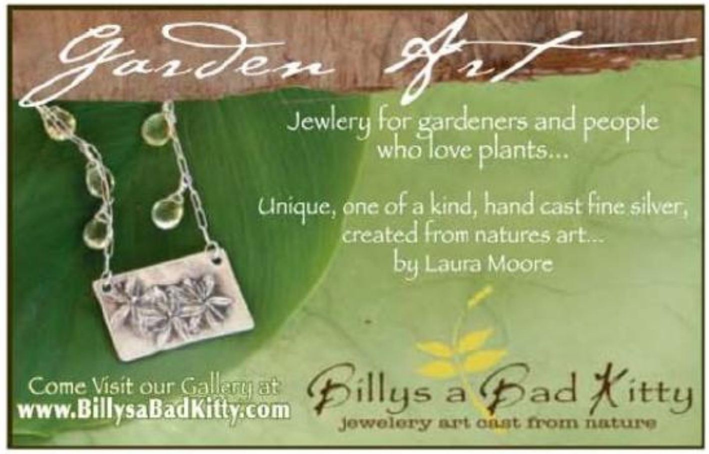

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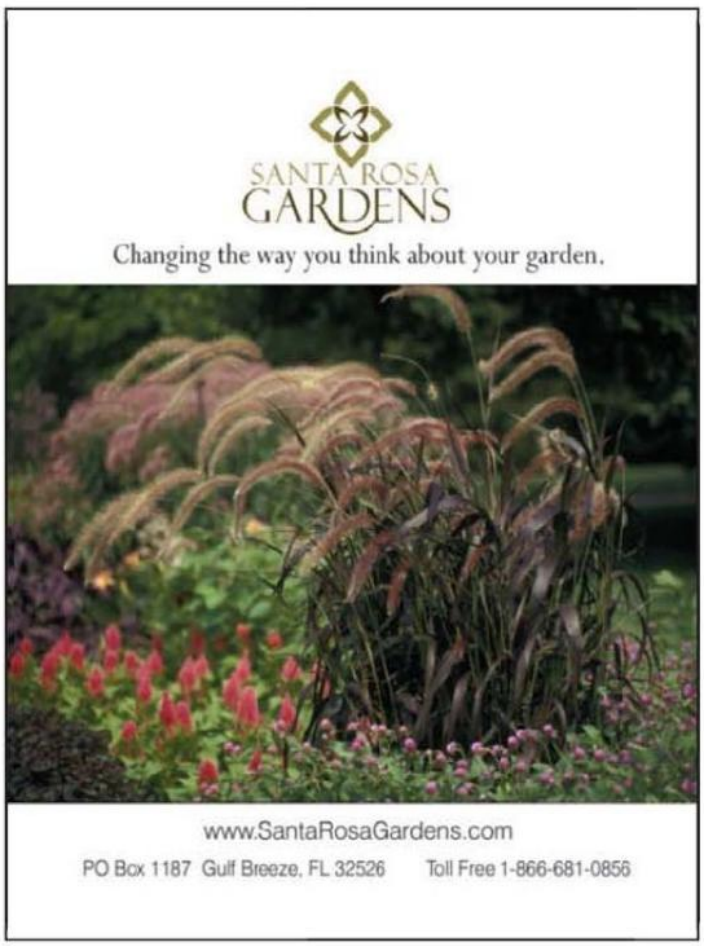

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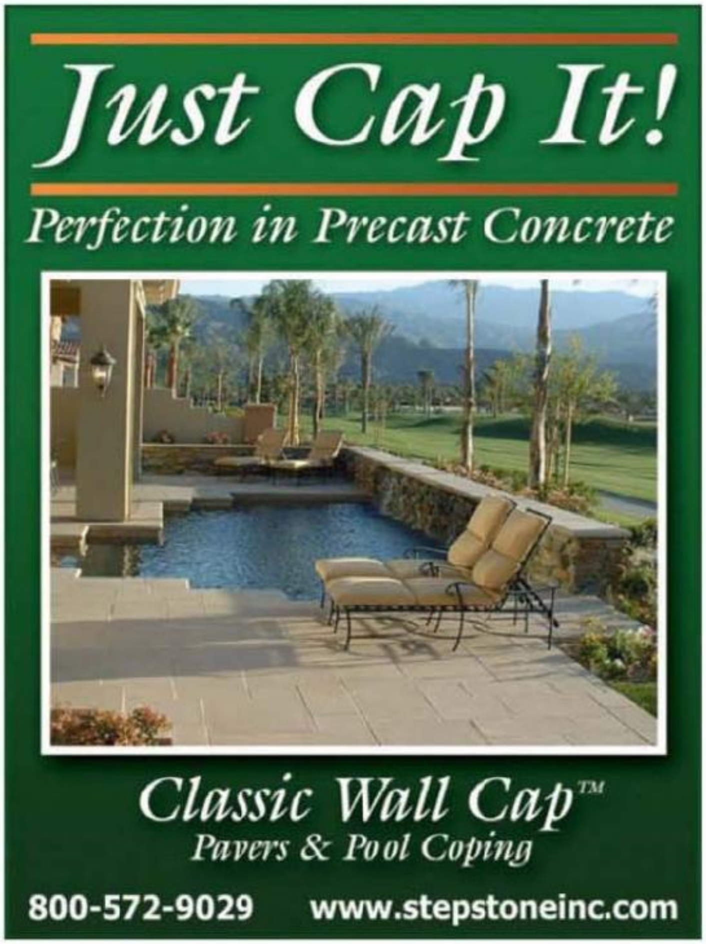

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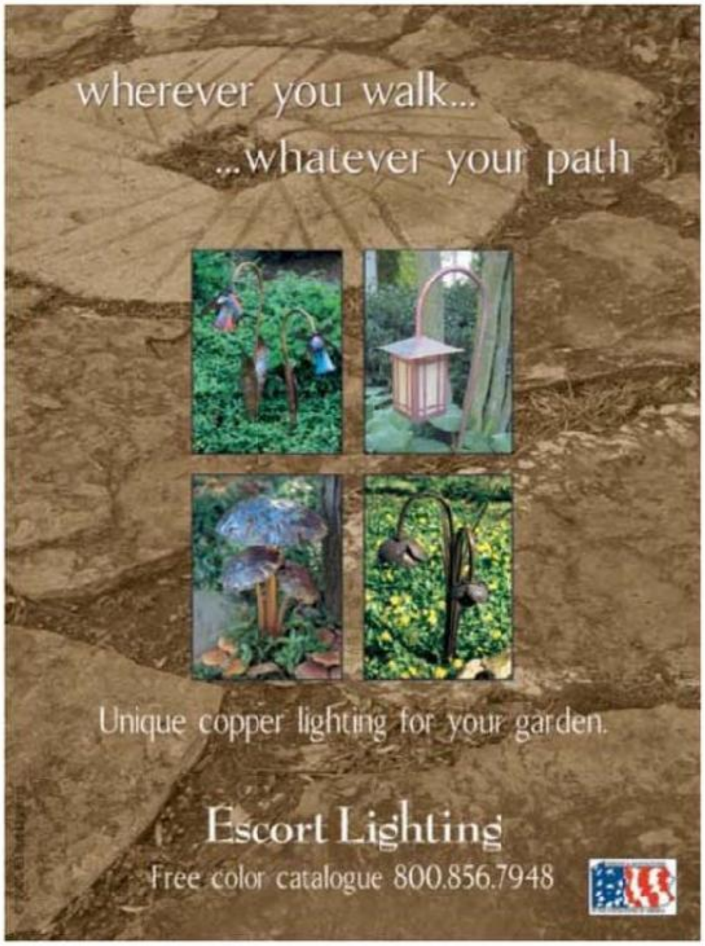

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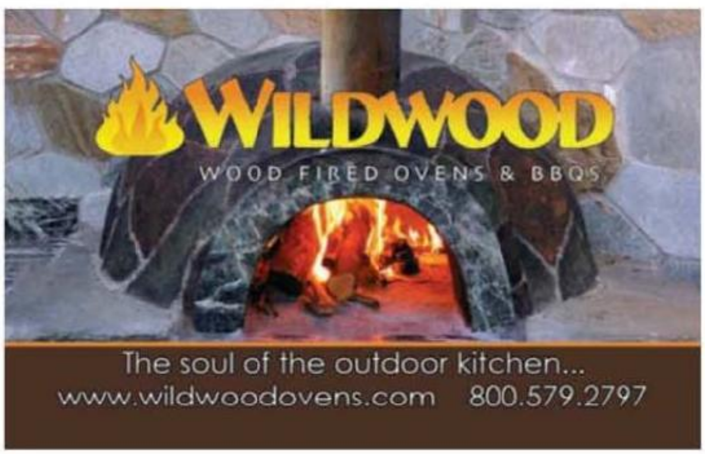

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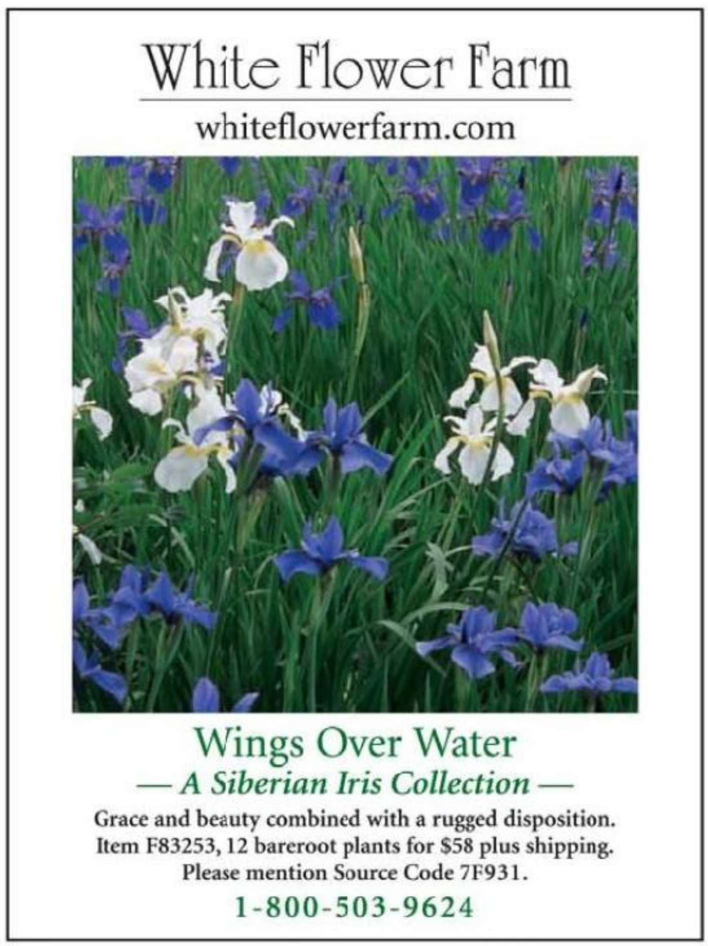

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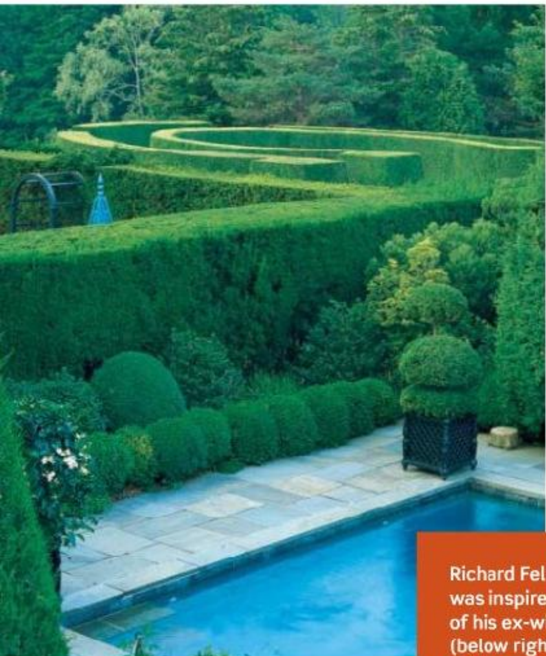

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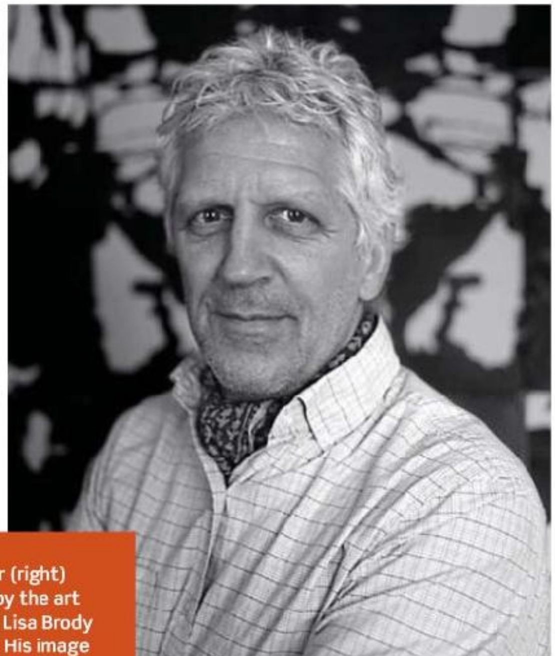

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RICHARD FELBER

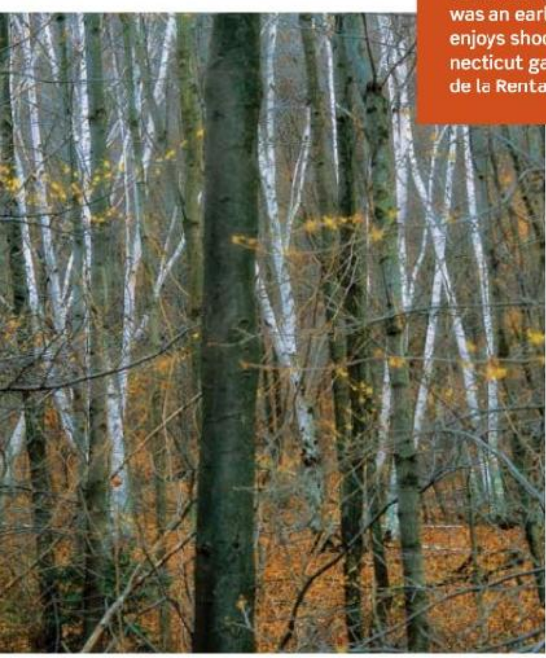
Shooting the Breeze

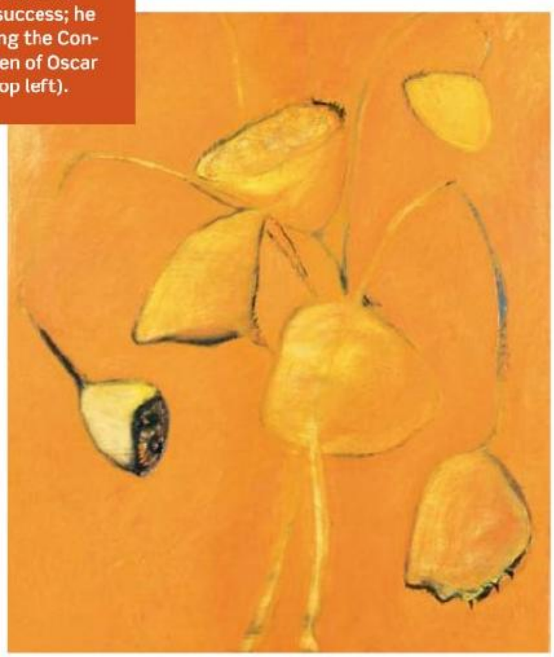
LIGHT, WEATHER THAT WON'T COOPERATE, AND A GARDEN OWNER WHO CUTS BACK her borders the day before a shoot — despite the frustrations, the role of a garden photographer is to reveal the perfection in nature that gardeners are too busy to enjoy. Richard Felber, born in the Bronx, winner of a Garden Writers Association Garden Globe, is one of the best. And he still prefers film to digital.





Richard Felber (right) was inspired by the art of his ex-wife Lisa Brody (below right). His image of birches (below left) was an early success; he enjoys shooting the Connecticut garden of Oscar de la Renta (top left).





Q. *Who has influenced your work the most?*
A. My ex-wife, the artist Lisa Brody. When I met her she did a lot of plein-air landscape painting, and I started to work alongside her.
Q. *Which of your pictures are you proudest of?*
A. I call it my dancing birches. It's an image I had seen in my head for a long time, and one day, on a cloudy, gray day in December, I set up my camera. It was the first time I'd executed a thought exactly as I saw it.
Q. *Where do you go to recharge creatively?*
A. My loft in New York.
Q. *Which is your favorite garden to shoot?*
A. Oscar de la Renta's garden in Connecticut. There's a lot of strength and masculinity there. I feel as though I've never finished seeing it. It's like a canvas to me.
Q. *What's your favorite everyday object?*
A. Small objects with texture and color, that you can handle. I have a rotating display on my table and windowsill that I change every few months. I like putting them away then seeing them afresh.
Q. *Do you ever meet gardens you can't shoot?*
A. All the time. A garden must have structure — without it there's no scale.
Q. *What's the hardest thing about your job?*
A. Getting up in the morning.
Q. *What's the secret of garden photography?*
A. A good light meter. And I'm not giving away anything else.
Q. *What are you least confident about?*
A. The technical stuff. Every time I take film to the lab I'm petrified that nothing is going to come out.
Q. *What is your greatest achievement?*
A. Getting married, having kids, giving up cigarettes and alcohol.
Q. *How would you like to go?*
A. Strangled by vines in the jungle. — JF

For more, see richardfelberphotography.com.

TOP LEFT, BOTTOM LEFT: RICHARD FELBER; TOP RIGHT: MAKI; BOTTOM RIGHT: LISA BRODY

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